

BASKETBALL PREVIEW

2024



NEW LOOK AT NORTHARK

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I WOULD LIKE FOR IT TO STAY ONE WAY FOR A WHILE

Back in the old days, there was a local disc jockey on KHOZ that dabbled as a recording artist. His name was Marc Williams and he had a song that had a great line in it. I did some searching and I could not find the exact line, but here is what I remember from hearing this song only a couple of times in my life.

“...yesterday you were a blonde, today a red headed, what will tomorrow be?”

This song could describe the life of Alpena athletics. This cycle we are 2A, next we will be 1A, what will the next cycle be?”

Alpena has switched classifications, the last five cycles. A cycle for the Arkansas Activities Association is two years and it matches schools by their size. Alpena is one of the schools that border on 1A and 2A each year.

They keep switching back and forth.

This year is a new year for the cycle and Alpena has moved back to 2A. They will be in with the schools from NWA. Who knows from week-to-week which one of the Haas Halls will be fielding a team as well as all of the other “schools” in NWA.

This year the 3A schools will be changing directions. For the last three or four cycles they included the teams of NWA.

Now, Bergman and Valley Springs move the other direction and pick up teams like Melbourne, Salem and Cave City.

Their regional also moves to the north-east side of the state with Manila, Hoxie and Osceola.

One of my favorite memories of covering basketball is when Johnny Taylor was coach at

Valley Springs. He tricked Osceola a couple of times during a regional game.

We have several new coaches in the area. Bergman and Valley Springs each have a new girls coach. That is two of the premier programs in the state with new leadership.

Omaha and Kingston have two new coaches, Deer, Mt. Judea and Alpena each have a new one. So, the sidelines will look different this year when taking in games.

Sleep for me is a thing of the past. I will be entering the season as an one-man sports team. I will also be entering the season with my other job of managing editor and general manager title. That eats up a lot of time.

Throwing in my grandsons and all of their activities, I am very busy.

If I am seen at a game just wondering around, point me in the right direction of the parking lot (if the game is over) or to the gym if the games haven’t started.

If you see me grabbing my heart, my nitro pills are in my wallet. Shove one under my tongue and send me home.

If I am acting normal...normal for me... grab a seat by me and let’s chat. I can’t wait to get a tub of popcorn in my hands and watch basketball.

Good luck this season. I hope each of you win all of your games. It should be another good year for hoops in the area.



Jeff Brasel

SPORTS EDITOR

Jeff Brasel is the sports and managing editor and general manager of the Harrison Daily Times. E-mail him at jeffb@harrisondaily.com or follow him at [X.com/jeffbrasel](https://x.com/jeffbrasel).



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Also, I have to thank Brandon Cone of North Arkansas College for helping me with a couple of photos. I appreciate the coaches of the schools for helping organize a time to take photos of their teams.

I have to thank my family. They have to tolerate me during this time of no sleep. However, my grandsons are always perfect and they were again this year. If I could find a job as a professional grandpa, I would take it. Abram Henry, Atticus Hatcher, Harley Michael and Rush Williams, I will be ready to play even more now. Becky, Lake and Hannah, thanks for your willingness to help me. I really do appreciate it.

Mark and Dusty, you be you.

Zach Holt, Scott McDonald, Loretta Knieff, Jeff Dezort and Lee Dunlap, I appreciate all of your help and proofing of stories.

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Pioneers are young, full of talent

By **JEFF BRASEL**
 jeffb@harrisondaily.com

North Arkansas College men's basketball team will be ready for the upcoming season.

There may be some bumps in the early going with the very young team, but as the season progresses it could be a special year.

Jordan Hunter is back to lead the squad this year. He has a very talented group from seven states and Arkansas. His team makes coaching fun.

"I am really enjoying coaching this team," he said. "They have bought into the program and they have the potential to be really good."

The effort that they give the coach is one of the things that impresses him about the squad.

"They play hard," he said. "There is not a lot of egos getting in the way. I really appreciate their daily attitudes. It has been fun to coach them."

This year the Region II looks different. There are 10 teams in Arkansas that are playing junior college basketball.

"It makes the scheduling a little easier," said Hunter. "We don't have to find as many games. You have 18 built in games, so that leaves you about 10 other games."

"We start to play regional games in December, January and February,"

continued the coach. "That really just leaves you playing non-conference in November and few dates during regional play. You don't want to get those games close to regional games."

With 10 league teams, the conference will automatically have a new look.

"The conference will be different," said Hunter. "Everyone lost a lot of players. I think out of the 15 All-Regional players, only one is back."

The conference also boast having the defending national champion in the region. National Park out of Hot Springs won the championship last season.

"Last year, I don't think it was a question that our region was the toughest in the nation," said Hunter. "We had five teams that were ranked and two teams in the national tournament."

Picking a front-runner is a hard concept. "Southeast Ark will be good early," said the coach. "National Park will have a new coach and a brand new squad. ASU Mid-South has a new squad as does Southark. It is anyone's guess."

As the season rolls around Hunter is pinpointing what he strength is of his team is.

"That is a tough question," he said. "We are so young. After our scrimmages, I think that our combo power forwards are performing pretty well. We have some good size on the interior with three players that are 6-foot-8. We

have a couple of 6'5" players. We could be a good shooting team if we continue to develop there."

The coach pointed to the youth of his team.

"We are so young," he said. "We only have three players back and they didn't see a lot of action. We are inexperienced."

"We might struggle early with some teams that have more experienced players," continued the coach. "It is not a great factor at the junior college level, but it will be a factor early."

As the season is pulling into the station, the Pioneers don't know exactly who will be in the lineup.

"We are getting closer to figuring out the rotation," said Hunter. "We started with a lot of kids, but we have had some that have left the program due to various reasons. We are down to 16 and two of those are hurt."

The Pioneers like an uptempo game, so a deep bench is important.

"We like to play fast," stated the coach. "We have some depth. We have depth at every position and there is not much of a let down when they are in the contest."

Hunter could have a different lineup on any night. He penciled in who he thought might be the starters on opening day.

At the one, Drew Akins of Springfield (Mo.) Kickapoo will be there.



MEN'S ROSTER

0	Jakare Carroll-Newton
1	Tyshawn Roper
2	Na'Kylan Starks
3	Beck Morrow
4	Trey Pulford
5	Izaak Porter
10	Mason Simpson
11	Gustavo Escamilla
13	Nicholas Huff
15	Latreveon Lowe
20	Drew Akins
22	Cordarius Hathorn
23	Jaxon Berry
24	De'Travis Fulton
30	David Johnson
33	Kaylon Cannon
34	Alonzo Driver

See **PIONEERS**, Page S6



LADY PIONEERS ROSTER

NO.	ATHLETE	HEIGHT	CLASS	HOMETOWN
0	Payton Clark	Freshman	5-6	Mena
1	Kailey Vaught	Freshman	5-5	Crane, Mo.
2	Keely Blanchard	Freshman	5-10	Norfolk
4	Emily Keehn	Freshman	5-8	Siloam Springs
10	Olivia Dean	Freshman	5-6	Nashville
12	Annabelle Massengale	Freshman	5-9	Harrison
14	Mya Fulton	Freshman	5-5	Sparta, Mo.
33	Kyndal Rooks	Sophomore	5-9	Rose Bud
34	Sydney Standridgew	Sophomore	6-0	Clinton
43	Samantha George	Sophomore	5-10	Blue Eye, Mo.

Lady Pioneers will field a young team

By JEFF BRASEL
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North Arkansas College's Lady Pioneers will be youthful this season.

However, don't let the young players fool anyone. The team has two returning players, but has eight new players that will mix it up with anyone on the court.

"When we get to full strength, we will have 10 players that get after you," said veteran Lady Pioneer coach Bobby Howard. "They all can play."

In junior college basketball, understanding the college game is something that the young players have to focus on.

"They understand that the quicker that they get it, the better we are," said Howard.

The Lady Pioneers are getting it.

"We have scrimmage several four-year schools and we have back to play with them," he said. "We have had only had seven players because of injuries, but we have been able to play with everyone."

The Pioneers have two players that injured knees late in their high school careers and they should be returning to the team early in the season.

When looking at his team, Howard is very happy with what he sees.

"They are good players and hard workers," he said. "They are great students and calculates to having a good team. When the players are smart and talented, that means a good team."

Howard went on to compliment his team.

"We can shoot it," he said. "Points can come from every position on the floor."

He did point out a perceived short coming of the group.

"I don't know if we can rebound all year," he joked about his guard-oriented team.

He went on to explain what is a tradition of Lady Pioneer basketball.

"We have a target on her back," he said. "They understand that everyone wants to beat Northark."

During the offseason, the Lady Pioneers' conference got a lot bigger.

"We now have nine teams on the women's side and 10 men's teams," Howard said of the expansion of the Division II of the National Junior College Athletic Association. "Phillips County in Helena and Seark (Southeast Arkansas College) in Pine Bluff both added programs this year."

The winner of the Region II tournament will play the winner of the Missouri region for a berth in the national tournament.

"North Central (Mo.) has won the playoff the last couple years and has done well in the national tournament," said Howard.

While in Arkansas, Howard looks for a competitive conference race.

"There are some good teams, but everyone lost a lot of sophomores last year," he said. "We really won't know how good anyone is until the season starts."

With the expansion of the conference, the Lady Pioneers have to be picky with their nonconference contests.

"It is easier to fill a schedule," Howard said. "We still have a lot of nonconference games that are very strong. Our nonconference schedule is pretty good."

See **LADY PIONEERS**, Page S7

PIONEERS SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME
NOVEMBER			
6	Arkansas Baptist JV	Harrison	6 p.m.
8-9	John Wood CC Classic	Quincy, Ill.	7 p.m./1 p.m.
12	Mission University JV	Harrison	7:30 p.m.
15	Brookhaven	Harrison	7:30 p.m.
16	Connors State College	Harrison	2 p.m.
19	Neosho County CC	Chanute, Kan.	7:30 p.m.
22	Southeaster Iowa	West Plains, Mo.	5 p.m.
23	Northeast Miss.	West Plains, Mo.	5 p.m.
29-30	MSU-West Plains Classic	West Plains, Mo.	5 p.m./7 p.m.
DECEMBER			
3	Phillips County CC	West Helena	7:30 p.m.
5	ASU, Mid-South	Harrison	7:30 p.m.
9	Southeast Arkansas CC	Pine Bluff	7:30 p.m.
12	SAU Tech	Camden	7:30 p.m.
JANUARY			
6	Shorter College	North Little Rock	7:30 p.m.
9	South Arkansas CC	El Dorado	7:30 p.m.
13	National Park College	Harrison	7:30 p.m.
16	UA, Cossatot	Lockesburg	7:30 p.m.
18	Williams Baptist JV	Harrison	12 p.m.
20	ASU, Newport	Harrison	6 p.m.
23	Phillips County CC	Harrison	7:30 p.m.
27	ASU, Mid-South	West Memphis	7:30 p.m.
30	Southeast Arkansas CC	Harrison	7:30 p.m.
FEBRUARY			
3	SAU Tech	Harrison	7:30 p.m.
6	Shorter College	Harrison	7:30 p.m.
10	South Arkansas CC	Harrison	7:30 p.m.
13	National Park College	Hot Springs	7:30 p.m.
17	UA, Cossatot	Harrison	7:30 p.m.
20	ASU, Newport	Newport	6 p.m.
24-Mar. 2	Region II Playoffs	TBA	TBA
MARCH			
8-9	District Playoffs	TBA	TBA
17-22	National Playoffs	Danville, Ill.	TBA

LADY PIONEERS SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME
NOVEMBER			
1	Lyon College JV	Harrison	7:30 p.m.
2	Fort Scott CC	Harrison	2 p.m.
5	State Fair CC	Sedalia, Mo.	5:30 p.m.
8-9	Crowder Classic	Neosho, Mo.	TBA
12	Mission JV	Harrison	5:30 p.m.
19	Neosho County CC	Chanute, Kan.	5:30 p.m.
DECEMBER			
4	Neosho County CC	Harrison	5:30 p.m.
5	ASU, Mid-South	Harrison	5:30 p.m.
9	Southeast Ark. Col.	Pine Bluff	5:30 p.m.
12	SAU, Tech	Camden	5:30 p.m.
14	Fort Scott CC	Fort Scott	2 p.m.
JANUARY			
6	Shorter College North	Little Rock	5:30 p.m.
9	South Ark. Col.	El Dorado	5:30 p.m.
13	National Park Col.	Harrison	5:30 p.m.
16	UA, Cossatot	DeQueen	5:30 p.m.
20	Phillips CC	Helena	5:30 p.m.
23	Phillips CC	Harrison	5:30 p.m.
27	ASU, Mid-South	West Memphis	5:30 p.m.
30	Southeast Ark. Col.	Harrison	5:30 p.m.
FEBRUARY			
1	Crowder College	Harrison	2 p.m.
3	SAU, Tech	Harrison	5:30 p.m.
6	Shorter College	Harrison	5:30 p.m.
8	Crowder College	Neosho, Mo.	2 p.m.
10	South Arkansas Col.	Harrison	5:30 p.m.
13	National Park Col.	Hot Springs	5:30 p.m.
17	UA, Cossatot	Harrison	5:30 p.m.
24-Mar. 2	Region II Playoffs	TBA	TBA
MARCH			
8-9	District Playoffs	TBA	TBA
17-22	National Playoffs	Joplin, Mo.	TBA

PIONEERS

Continued from Page S4

"He is a little undersized at 5'10"," started the coach. "But he is strong. He is use to winning and competing against national level teams. He gets the job done."

At the two position, it will be redshirted sophomore Trey Pulford from Williard, Mo.

"He has been playing well," said Hunter. "He has the leadership and I am please with he has done on the court."

Checking in at the three position is David Johnson from Saginaw, Texas.

"He is 6'2" and very athletic," stated the coach. "He has some point guard skills. He can score, but he needs to develop his shot a little more."

The four spot will be held down by Izaak Porter of Columbia, Mo.

"He spent last year at Link Year Prep, so he is a little older," said Hunter. "He is a three level scorer. He can score big points for us."

The interior post position is still up for grabs.

"That is up in the air," stated

the coach. "We don't know yet. We have several options."

With that position being up for grabs, Hunter spoke of other players that he expects an immediate impact from.

"Gustavo Escamilla is very skilled and hard working," said the coach. "He has been a big surprise this year. We recruited him late and we are happy he is here."

Na'Kylan Starks is a freshman guard from Coweta, Okla.

"He played football last year," said Hunter. "He is making the transition back to basketball. He has worked hard."

Latreyveon Lower is a 6'8" freshman from Collins, Miss.

"He is super physical," started the coach. "He is a shot blocker and finisher. He is a little raw."

Jaxon Berry is a forward from Farmington.

"He will play a major role for us," said Hunter. "He has had a little down time, but he will be back and ready to help us. He will be playing through some pain this year."

Beck Morrow of Mountain View has made strides.

"He got in better shape this year," stated the coach. "He has gotten better. He can shoot it."

Jakare Carroll-Newton of St. Petersburg, Fla. has endured a season ending injury last year and is back this year.

"He will make us better," said Hunter. "He will help us in the second semester."

The team is still full of talent and any of these players could see quality minutes for Northark.

Tyshawn Roper, Pensacola, Fla.; Mason Simpson, Farmington, Nicholas Huff, Oglethorpe County, Ga.; DaTravis Fulton, West Helena; Kaylon Cannon, Pine Bluff; and Alonzo Driver, Campti, La. are all quality players.

LADY PIONEERS

Continued from Page S5

Back to lead the Lady Pioneers this season is Sydney Standridge and Samantha George.

Standridge averaged 11 points and seven rebounds a game last year.

"She works hard and she gotten even better this fall," Howard said of his sophomore from Clinton. "She takes it personal. She has gotten better. She is our only returning starter and she understands what the game is about. She will lead us."

The other returning sophomore is George from Blue Eye, Mo.

"She averaged four points and two rebounds a game last year in a reserve role for us," said the coach. "She is extremely hard working and loves the game. She is 5-foot-10 and is very strong and athletic. She is very hunger for her sophomore year. She is recovering from a sprain ankle."

Another player that appears as a sophomore on the roster is Kyndal Rooks of Rose Bud.

"She transferred from Ouachita Baptist," started the coach. "She set out last year and she is ready to get back on the court. She is a strong kid that works hard. She has good size and I expect her to be a presence this year."

Northark will have a Boone County taste this season as Anabelle Massengale from Harrison will be a Lady Pioneer.

"She is strong," said Howard. "She really wants to do well. Her best basketball is in front of her. She works really hard and will be an asset to the team."

Another local product is Keely Blanchard of Norfolk.

"She is adjusting nicely to the college game," said Howard. "She is long and athletic. She need to be aggressive."

Former 5A-West player Emily Keehn of Siloam Springs will be ready to play for the Lady Pioneers.

"She is athletic and hard-working," started the coach of the 5-8 forward. "She is a good student and I am not sure she knows how good she can be. She jumps well and is quick. She can shoot it. She needs more confidence."

Kailey Vaught is a 5-5 guard from Crane, Mo.

"She comes from a really good program," stated Howard. "She knows how to play. She has the skills. She needs a little more confidence to go with it."

Another Missouri product is Mya Fulton of Sparta.

"She has been a pleasant surprise," said Howard. "She is a heady little guard that gets

things done. She shoots it well and when there is a steal or a rebound, she is there. She is tough."

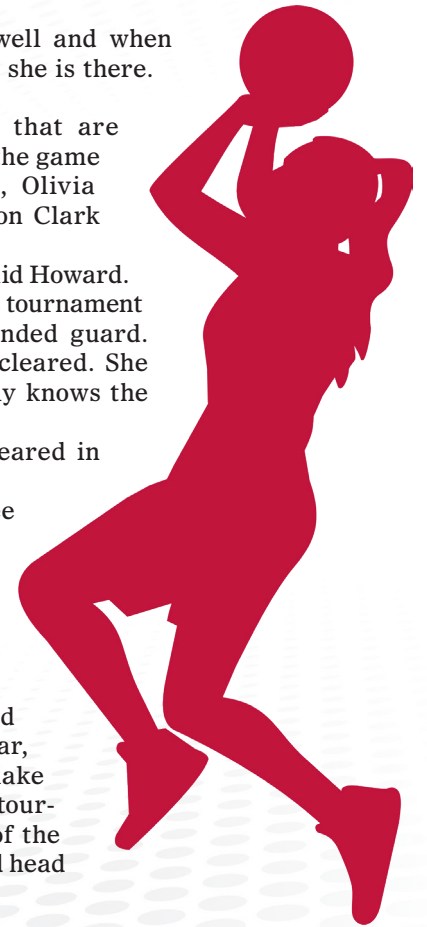
The two injured players that are working their way back into the game are both coach's daughters, Olivia Dean of Nashville and Payton Clark of Mena.

"Olivia is a great player," said Howard. "She was the MVP of the state tournament two year ago. She is left-handed guard. I am excited for her to get cleared. She can really shoot it. She really knows the game."

Dean is expected to be cleared in December.

"Clark is coming off knee surgery," said Howard of the 5-6 freshman. "She is hard-nosed and really knows how to play. She can score and she is a little mean on the court."

As the Lady Pioneers blend their team together this year, the squad will be ready to make another run for the national tournament. The team has a lot of the right keys to start the bus and head to Joplin, Mo. for the event.



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A good blend of players will take floor for Alpena

By JEFF BRASEL

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ALPENA — For the first time in nearly two decades, the Alpena Leopards will be under new leadership.

Dylan Kilgore is the new head coach of the team as the team moves back to Class 2A after spending the last two seasons in Class 1A.

Kilgore has solid players as he begins the new season.

“I like our broad range of age,” he said. “We have a good mix of sophomores, juniors and seniors. It has been nice to see them learn how to play with teammates they haven’t been accustomed to being on the floor with through preseason and early into the season.”

The new coach likes the strengths that he sees in his

team.

“Our strength is going to have to be on the defensive end,” he said. “We work at it and are improving every day. On the offensive end, we are going to have to push the ball and play inside out through some of our bigs.”

Kilgore states that the team is going to need to do a better job of defensive rebounding.

He has a plan for that.

“We are working on positioning and dynamics to put ourselves into positions to win the battle on the glass,” he said.

This year the Leopards will use different defenses.

“We will use a combination of man, zone and hybrid pressure defense,” the coach stated.

On the offensive end will switch between a couple of styles.

See **ALPENA**, Page S28

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SPORTS

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Alpena girls will feature hunger team

By JEFF BRASEL
jeffb@harrisonsdaily.com

ALPENA — When the Alpena girls take the court this season, the squad will be giving their coach everything that they have.

The team is eager to learn and that is what is desired by coach Michael Smith during the upcoming season.

“They are young and very coachable,” the coach said about his team. “they are willing to learn. They want to be successful and are willing to do what it takes to be successful.”

The team has another characteristic that will help them go far this year.

“They have some good team chemistry and get along well with each other,” he said.

When Smith looks at the strengths of his team, he likes what he sees.

“We will have more height than in years past, so we shouldn’t have as big of a disadvantage on size like the years past,” he said. “We are a little more athletic than in the past couple of year. That should help us be able to do a little more creative things on defense.”

There are some things that Smith and team will have to overcome for the season.

“We are a very young team,” started the coach. “We lost a good amount of our scoring from a year ago. We will have new players stepping into the roles and it will

take some time of adjusting.”

Smith has a plan to overcome the youth on his squad.

“We will have to rely on our upperclassmen as leaders and really have to learn as we go,” he said.

The Lady Leopards will play a variety of defenses. They will use most man-to-man and zone concepts.

Offensively, the Lady Leopards will use a motion offense and mix in some sets.

The Lady Leopards will set some tough nonconference games this year.

“We play Bergman, Valley (Springs), Flippin, Jasper, Omaha, Kingston and Cotter,” stated the coach. “We play these teams every year and every year they are tough opponents for us.”

“We will be going to Lincoln over Thanksgiving to play in their classic.” continued the coach. “We will see teams like Mountainburg and Prairie Grove which will be good for us. We also go down south and play teams like Star City. It always helps us for later in the year.”

Alpena will be moving into Class 2A this season. Their league will change.

“I like our conference for this year because it will be a new challenge for us,” said the coach. “Ozark Mountain is always tough and then getting to see some of the schools up in the Fayetteville area like we did my first couple of years here. I think we will be able to compete night in and night out with the teams in our conference.”

Smith pointed to the new regional this year. “We will have Mountainburg, Acorn, Danville and Johnson County Westside in our region. Mountainburg and Acorn are both usually good teams on the state level.”

To help prepare the team for the post-season, Alpena will be playing in the Northark and Flippin tournaments as well as the classics in Lincoln and Drew Central in Monticello.

Alpena has three returning starters back this year. Bryanna McNair, Rhonie Jetton and Crandall Eppes all started throughout the year last season.

“McNair ended the year shooting the ball really well and I expect her to grow on that this season along with expanding her game,” started Smith talking about the trio. “Eppes is a quick, athletic guard who helps us a lot on defense and brings the ball up the court. Jetton is a post player for us who does a tremendous job of guarding post players bigger than her.”

There are several younger players looking to see time on the floor this year. Emily Wray, Candice Moore and Talia Hilton are sophomores that had great springs and summers.

“They are getting better and will have to be ready to go and to set into big roles for our team,” said the coach. “they each have good size and athleticism along with really improving their shooting from the outside.”

Smith pointed to the strengths of the

players.

“Wray is good at attacking the rim and scoring,” started Smith. “She has really improve at shooting the basketball. She has shown the ability to make tough shots from all three levels.

“More is one who has an ability to get to the rim as well and has taken some big strides in her offensive ability to score the basketball,” the coach continued. “Hilton has really taken a big step this fall as she has always been a great rebounder. She is now looking to expand her offensive game and looking to score the ball more than in the past.”

There are two other Lady Leopards that will be looking to press for time on the court this year.

The coach pointed to Gracie Harrison and Danelle Sanchez as players that will be looking to log quality minutes for the team.

Junior High

The Alpena Junior Lady Leopards will be fielding a young squad this season.

Most of the team members moved from last season moved to the senior high squad this year.

“Our junior high team will be young,” said Smith of the squad that was conference and district runners-up last year.

Team members include: Blair Eppes; Tinley Comer; Hadleigh Hawthorne; Kamri Case; Jaxsen Stewart; Alyssa Woods; and Ella Wray.

Bergman ready to take next step

By JEFF BRASEL
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BERGMAN — When it comes to experience, the Bergman Panthers are full of play under the big lights. After two straight trips to the Class 3A State Basketball Tournament finals, the Bergman Panthers are ready to take the next step.

With a nucleus of players back and a key transfer, the Panthers will present problems for teams in any classification.

Bo Martin is back pulling the strings for the team that has been to the regional tournament six years in a row and two years to state.

When asked what he liked best about his team, Martin replied, “We have a great returning nucleus with postseason experience.”

The coach talked about what is the strength of his team this year.

“Dylan Friend and Zion Fultz will be one of the best guard line-ups in the state for our classification,” he said. “The front line size of 6-foot-7 Sawyer Schubert and 6-9 Hayden Jones will also present matchup problems for other teams around the basket.”

While the team has three returning starters back in Friend, Fultz and Schubert, the experience on the court stops there.

“We have several guys with little or no experience playing big roles for us,” said the coach.

To cover that weakness, the coach replied that they will have “trial by fire.”

The Panthers, who finished 34-11 last season, will use a combination of defenses. Expect to see man-to-man and zones being displayed on the court.

Bergman wants a fast-paced contest.

“We will try to play very fast and get in transition as much as possible,” said the coach. “In the half-court, we want to put the ball in our playmakers’ hands and let

them make plays. We want a healthy balance of playing through our bigs.”

In non-conference play, Bergman will have some strong teams on the schedule. E-Stem, who took the Panthers to double overtime in the opening week of the year, Tuckerman, Drew Central, Lamar, Manila and Lisa Academy will be strong competition.

This season the Panthers will have a new look in conference play. They will be traveling east for league games.

“Our conference will be a good league,” said Martin. Traveling to Cave City, Melbourne and Mountain View will make for some long nights, but most leagues have some trips like that. We have been blessed with reasonable travel for the most part.”

When asked about the regional competition, Martin pointed to Osceola, Rivercrest, Manila and Newport as talented teams to face in regional competition.

Bergman is in three tournaments this season. They will play at Green Forest, Lendel Thomas in Harrison and a tournament at Arkansas Tech.

The Panthers’ Hoopsgiving Classic will be a strong event as well.

Bergman has nearly 40 points returning in the trio of starters that are back.

“Friend is one of the best scorers in the state averaging 19.8 points a game,” said the coach. “He can score all three levels and keeps getting better every year.”

Martin continued. “Zion is a great defender and does a little bit of everything

for us. He averaged 8.1 points a game last year and will be taking on a bigger role on the offensive end for us. Sawyer averaged over 11 points a game, eight rebounds and two blocks for us last year. He is a huge presence for us on both ends of the floor.”

Filling out the lineup will be Jones and Colby Mills.

“Hayden Jones is a new addition to our team,” said Martin. “He is 6-9 and extremely long. He has worked very hard to improve his game and will create some mismatch problems for teams.”

“Colby Mills is a senior who has really improved a lot from last year. He is one of the strongest and fastest players on the team. I expect him to have a great senior year for us.

Bergman may have a problem this year in not having enough balls to go around.

“We have as many as 12 guys who could get minutes for us this year, so it will depend on who can make the most out of their opportunities,” said the coach when asked about key reserves. “Zeb Adkins played in a lot of games for us last year off of the bench, so he has some good experience. Jace Holt is 6-2 and strong. He has worked very hard and will get some opportunities.

“Cody Sain is a 6-3 senior who is one of our best athletes on the team,” continued Martin. “Jess Friend can shoot it and handle the ball and can give us some good guard depth. Hunter Rogers, Douglas Case and Bentley Hensley are

talented sophomores who could possibly contribute for us this year.

Martin pointed to his team and stated that there were other players that would be pushing for time on the court.

He stated that Rylan Bauer, Brayden Carter, Mason Hayes, Logan Henson, Landon Hayes, Will Curtis, Walker Curtis and Evan Berry were all capable players.

Junior High

The Bergman Junior panthers had a great season last year and have one returning starter back from a team that went to the semifinals of the district tournament.

“We will have another talented group with hopes to be one of the top teams in our league again,” he said.



Lady Panthers to defend state title with new coach

By JEFF BRASEL
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BERGMAN — The Bergman Lady Panthers will take a youthful team into the season to defending its Class 3A State Basketball Tournament title.

Bergman, who has won two of the last three state titles, will be suiting up in a new conference with a new coach as well.

David Eichler moves to Bergman to coach the Lady Panthers after a successful run in Omaha.

Eichler has a team with experience, but he has only two seniors and two juniors. The remaining seven players are sophomores and freshmen.

When the coach looks at his team, he is happy with what he sees.

“We have several returning starters and contributors,” he said. “Our biggest strength will be our shooting.”

Eichler has one problem when he looks out over his team.

“Our lack of size,” he said about what he perceives to be a weakness.

To cover the situation, the team “will use different defensive coverages and playing harder and more aggressively,” he said.



That aggressive defense will come from a man-to-man.

The Lady Panthers will use a motion offense that features screens and dribble drives.

Bergman has loaded up its schedule in order to be ready for the final tournament at the end of the year. Fort Smith Northside, Lamar, Jonesboro along with the Lendel Thomas Classic and Tournament of Champions are on the schedule this year.

The Lady Panthers, Valley Springs and Flippin were moved to a new conference this season. They are members of the 3A-2 moving from the 3A-1. The league will be tough every night.

“This should be one of the toughest conferences in girls basketball at any classification,” said the coach. “Four teams in our new conference have won a state championship in the last seven years.”

Regional tournament assignments have also switched with the new conference. The 3A-2 will now play the 3A-3 which are the northeast Arkansas schools.

“Our region has several good teams as well,” he said. “Manila being the best of them.”

Four starters are back for the Lady Panthers — Jacey Halitzka; Brinley Collins; Kiersten Lowery; and Taryn Holt.

Halitzka averaged nine points a game last season for the Lady Panthers as a freshman. Lowery chipped in eight and Collins and Holt got seven each.

Joining those four players will be one of two post players. Alivia Norris and Kinsley See will be in the interior.

Bergman is full of depth. Eichler thinks that Kyna See, Paige Smith, Nealy Nuessner, Avery West and Eukirah West will each see quality time for the Lady Panthers.



Junior High

The Bergman Junior Lady Panthers will have a tough tradition to continue. Bergman won the conference and district championships last season.

Team members include: Kenzye Lowry; Ireland Fultz; Abree Patton; Cambria Burleson; Reeona Huskey; Delsie Livley; Brett Anderson; Haidyn Cluer; Faith Gabbard; Calista Green; Brinley Taylor; Taiya Sims; Laken McBride; and Maeleigh McLean.

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Deer will be under direction of Johnson

By **JEFF BRASEL**
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DEER — Daniel Johnson is the new Deer coach.

This season, the school will field a junior and senior boys team. The coach is happy to be in Deer.

“I was born and raised in Indiana,” he said of his background. “I played at the University of Indiana, Indianapolis.”

Coaching is in Johnson’s blood.

“My parents were coaches and both of my brothers,” said Johnson.

When Johnson got to Deer he didn’t know exactly what to expect.

“When I got here, I heard that they were down,” he said. “However, the kids have great attitudes are pretty good. They work hard and they do what I ask of them.”

The team is full of experience this year with veteran players.

“We have six seniors,” said the coach. “We have a good maturity level that is good in practice and will be seen during games.”

Johnson continued about his team.

“We have three sophomores that are pretty talented,” he continued. “There is a lot of opportunities for us.”

One of the characteristics that Johnson pointed out about his team is the size.

“We are big,” he said. “We will be putting a lot of players on the floor that are well over 6-foot.”

He continued about the team. “We are also strong and athletic,” he said.

The Antlers will compete in every game and will be a force to deal with at the end of the season.

“It is a process,” he said. “We are working on how to play basketball. We are getting a little better every day. That is what you hope for as a coach.”

The defensive end of the floor, the Antlers will take advantage of their home court.



“I like to press,” said the coach. “If I have the horses, I will press. We have some depth so I would like to play uptempo defense.”

When the team has had the press broken, the Antlers will fall back into a zone.

“I fall back into a 2-3,” said Johnson. “We are trying to fly around in it. I would love to play man-to-man, but we are not there yet.”

“We will pressure as much as we can,” he continued. “As much as depth and foul trouble will allow us too.”

When it comes to offense, Johnson will dust off some play books.

“I am old school,” he said. “I run a lot of motion and continuity things. We will run a motion, but we have six or seven sets that we will run to get into it. We have a more structured approach.”

Johnson continued about his offense.

“We will be organized and efficient,” he said. “Execution is important to us. We have to play as a team and work together.”

Deer and Johnson sees a chance for the Antlers to be in the top tier of the league.

“There is an opening for us to be in the top of the conference and make regionals,” Johnson said.

Being new in the league, Johnson is not sure of how the conference will shake out.

“I don’t know too much about every team,” said Johnson. They have a lot of kids at Lead Hill that have moved in. They are very talented. Kingston has a new coach and they will be OK. Omaha will be OK. Jasper will be good. Deer and Mt. Judea had struggled the most

in the last couple of years, but I think will be OK.”

There will be several players that will have height when they take the floor for the Antlers.

Kaden Moore will be in the lineup.

“He is a big kid at 6-foot-6,” said Johnson. “He can jump. He is a good 3-point shooter. When he gets it going, he can score points. he has varsity experience level. He can really get a streak going.”

Another player for Deer is Ayden Burdine.

“He is incredible athletic,” said the coach. “He is long and has a good mid-range game. He can get in the lane. He can get up on his jump shot. He is great in the open floor.”

Carson Breedlove is another wide body for the Antlers.

“He is 6’5”, 270 pounds and strong as a bull,” stated Johnson. “He is light on his feet. He is very nimble. He is going to play interior defense. He has a good personality. He is good in the locker room.”

Mason Guinnip is another player with experience.

“He is similar to Moore,” stated Johnson. “He came back this year. He is 6’2” and very strong. He is a nice compliment to Carson. He has a good basketball IQ. He gets it.”

See **DEER**, Page S28



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Full Pirate crew back on board at Jasper

By JEFF BRASEL

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JASPER — In the 2023 Class 1A State Basketball Tournament, the Jasper Pirates played the eventual state champions the closest of anyone in the tournament.

All of those players are back and the Pirates are ready to see if they can make some noise on a state level.

Mike Parker is the head coach of the team and he has some height, some shooting and quickness in his ship full of Pirates.

When he was asked what he liked about his team, the veteran stated, “all of my starters are returning.”

He feels that the strength of his team is going to be “good size and good shooting.”

When the Pirates line up to play this season, the team will play a zone on

defense and when on offense they will use a motion.

The Pirates are in a pair of tournaments this season as well as a classic. They hope to gain more experience to get them prepared for the postseason run that the team wants to make.

Jasper will be in the Clinton and North Arkansas College Tournaments. They are also playing in the Pangburn Classic.

Parker feels that his tournament schedule along with Greers Ferry Westside will offer his team a lot of competition.

When looking at the 1A-1East schedule, Parker feels that Lead Hill will be a team to watch for.

Teams have to win the first round of the regional tournament to make an appearance in state. Parker mentioned three teams would be tough from the other conference that will be part of the regional.



“County Line, Magazine and Mulberry will all be good teams,” he said.

The starting lineup has a lot of experience for the Pirates.

Four seniors and a junior will round out the top five spots.

Spencer Traywick is the man in the middle. He is 6-foot-5 and a good athlete.

Sawyer Willis is a hybrid player that can go outside or inside.

Malijah Campbell is a strong inside player with quickness.

Parker also starts a pair of seniors. Blake Williams is very quick and good shooter.

Ty Williams is a quick guard and a good shooter.

The Pirates have experience coming off the bench in Canaan Hudson. He is a good defender and good ball handler.

Also coming into the game will be Tyson Davis, who is a good scorer; Lance Flud, who is a good shooter, and Max Davis, who is a big strong player.

Braden Case Jevyn Lager and Tate Smith will be fighting for time on the court for the Pirates.

Junior High

When it comes to the Jasper Junior Pirates, Parker has the same problem as he has with the senior high. He has a lot of experience coming back on a team that was very successful last season.

Four starters are back for Jasper. The team was conference and district champions.

They also won the Jasper Tournament and were runner-up in the Clinton Junior High Tournament.

Team members include: Kade Brown; Ryker Burns; Anderson Carlton; Ethan Collins; Sam Davis; Jaydon Dextre; Vayden Freeman; Grady Hankins; Rowdy Hodge; Auston Hood; Jackson Hughes; Caleb Kolb; Peyton Kolb; Josiah Lawson; Henery Martin; Gunnar McDonald; Kolby Middleton; Kasen Pruitt; Giovanni Ramirez; Jerrick Reddell; Ayden Reed; Jake Reynolds; Jayce Rylee; Jordan Sams; Caleb Smith; Aaron Thomas; Lucas Traywick; Jase Willis; Rylan Wright; and Eli Young.

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Jasper girls will be ready to take back top spot

By **JEFF BRASEL**
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JASPER — The Jasper Lady Pirates are ready to reclaim the top spot of the 1A-1East.

After being conference runner-up and district runner-up, the Lady Pirates were also regional runner-up earning a trip to the Class 1A State Basketball Tournament for the fourth year in row.

Jasper has been to the regional tournament for more than 20 years in a row and have been to the regional finals two straight years.

The Lady Pirates were 24-15 last year. They are back under the direction of Ben Grice.

When Grice looks at his team, he likes what he sees.

“We are fast,” he said. “we have depth and we are more experienced than in past years.”

Those characteristics are complimented by basketball skills.

“Our quickness and shooting are our biggest strengths,” he stated. “Along with our depth.”

When looking at chinks in the armor, Grice pointed to one thing.

“Size could play a factor,” he said. “We have minimal size compared to some of the other teams in the state.”

He sees a way for his team to be successful.

“We will pressure to force turnovers to over our size disadvantage in some games,” he stated.

He said that the team will use a “denial man” defense. While on offense the team will use a “pace and space” approach.

The Lady Pirates will see several good teams this season. The team will face two of the better Class 3A schools in Bergman and Mountain View. They will compete against Class 6A Heritage and they will face Greers Ferry Westside.

On the conference front, Grice sees some good teams in the league.

“I like our conference,” he said. “Kingston and Omaha will be teams to look out for.”

When looking at the future regional matchups, Grice feels that this league will be top teams in the regional play.

“I believe the teams in our conference will still be the teams to watch for in the region,” he said.

To get prepared for postseason play, the Lady Pirates will try their hand at winning three tournaments. The team is entered into the North Arkansas College tourney along with the Clinton tournament and the Omaha Classic.

Jasper returns a stable full of players that saw starting minutes last year.

“We are returning our entire team from last year and adding some young players that will help us,” started the coach when asked about starters for the games. Lyla Raulston, Tiana Siebert, Laney Daniels, Jadeyn Middleton, Maggie Thomas, Willa Young, Raye Stokes and Charlee Breedlove are the top athletes. These players have more experience this

year and have a chip on their shoulder due to losing some close games last year.”

There are more weapons at the Lady Pirates disposal.

“Camber Srum, Aurora Gilmore and Emmy Denniston will help us,” said the coach. “These three are all great shooters. They are hard workers that can defend and give us a spark.”

Junior High

The Junior Lady Pirates have big shoes to fill this year. Last season the Junior Lady Pirates were 23-4 and undefeated in conference play and were winners of the district tournament as well as their own tournament.

This year the team members are: Paisley Manen; Delaney Redell; Rylea Martin; Kylee Carlton; Jessa Edgmon; Kinley Stephens; Abby Daniels; Ella Edgmon; McKenna Davis; Kaitlynn Martin; Tinleigh Adams; Harper Hudson; Emily Farmer; Addison Martin; Braylee Shrum; Mia Sallee; Rhiley Mace; Ellie Freeman; and Callie Patton.

Harris is leading flight of Yellow Jackets

By JEFF BRASEL
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KINGSTON — When it comes to tradition, the Kingston basketball program is full of it.

This season the proud tradition will rest on the shoulders of Justin Harris as he takes over as the new head coach of the program.

Kingston has been to the regional tournament 24 of the last 25 seasons with only one absence three seasons ago.

Coming into the new year, Harris likes what he sees in his team.

“We play very scrappy,” he said. “We also share the ball well and everyone gets along well.”

When looking at the basketball strengths of the team, Harris saw some good characteristics.

“We play extremely hard as a team and we feel our overall guard play will be a strength for us,” he said.

However, the Yellow Jackets have a shortcoming.

“We lack size and depth,” the coach stated.

To cover the lack of both, Harris has a plan.

“We will try to mix things up defensively to keep offenses off balanced,” he said. “We will be able to run multiple looks on defense to keep the offense guessing.”

Opponents can expect to see different looks from Kingston.

“We will be a primarily man-to-man team,” he said. “But we will play some zone and press at times.”



Offensively, Harris has an attack that he likes.

“I prefer to run read and react,” he said. “But we will also run a variety of sets to try and get quick looks at the basket.”

When looking at games that the Yellow Jackets have on the schedule, there will be three that will stretch the team to the limits. Kingston plays Bergman, Sloan-Hendrix and Flippin.

There has been some changes in the 1A-1East for this season.

“The conference is very similar to last year with only School for Advanced Studies and Founders Classical joining,” he said. “Alpena moved to 2A and Oark switched to a new conference. Problem wise, travel will increase some as compared to last year, but not substantially.”

On the regional level, a couple of teams were dropped from the league from last year and a couple of teams were added.

“Two very strong teams in New School and Ozark Christian were moved and they added a couple of teams,” he said. “I think that side of the regional became weaker.”

Teams to watch for in regional play will be County Line, Mulberry and Magazine, who dropped from Class 2A.

The Yellow Jackets will be in the Flippin, Green Forest and Calico Rock tourneys this year.

Kingston has two returning starters back this season. Ethan Clark and Caleb Parker are back.

“Clark is a very athletic guard who can score from all three levels,” said Harris. “Parker is an athletic guard who can shoot it well from the three and is a good on ball defender.”

Clark averaged 15 a game last season and Parker got six a contest.

Five players are in the battle for a starting position. Depending on the opponent, Kingston can put multiple lineups on the floor.

Those that are battle for time are seniors Keith Pearson and Billy Kilbourn; juniors Bryce Bancroft and Tag Villines; sophomores Blaine Villines, Levi Barnett; and Conan Kilbourn; and freshman Ty Floyd.

Junior High

Kingston’s junior high team will be looking for an identity this season. More



than half of the team are seventh-graders.

“We will be looking for guys to step up and lead the team this year,” said the coach.

Team members include: Josiah Humphreys; Marcus Kilbourn; Jesse Palazzi; Dilon Randall; Matthew Huber; Evan Carlton; Trey Walker; Lane Bradenburg; Jacob Shell; Mason Bellinger; Caleb Edgmon; Blaize Eklund; and Roger Wheeler

Kingston girls are looking to continue success

By JEFF BRASEL
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KINGSTON — When the Kingston Lady Yellow Jackets take the court to start the season, the team is turning to a new coach to lead the tradition-rich program.

Patrick Drennan will take the lead at the program that has been to the regional tournament for more than 20 years in a row.

The Lady Yellow Jackets have been to the state tournament for 23 straight years.

That puts pressure on a first-year coach. However, he has a team that knows how to play,

“I have really enjoyed watching them gel and come together as a team,” said Drennan. “Our kids play incredibly hard and are very fun to watch. We play a very exciting brand of basketball.”

The coach pointed to the strong point of the team’s game.

“Our strength, without a doubt, is our transition game,” he said. “We are very disciplined in sprinting to the sidelines and getting the ball inbounded quick and up the court before the defense can get set. We are also very efficient at the free throw line.”

While the team is effective on offense, it is lacking on defense.

“Right now we are lacking a mentality to guard,” he said. “I love the progress we have made in a few short months.”

The coach is working on the defensive side of the football.



“We just have to get to work every day in practice and keep grinding and working to take pride in our defense.”

The team will run a man defense with some zone.

On the offensive end, Kingston will run a five out.

The Lady Yellow Jackets have some stacked teams on their schedule this year. The team has met with Bergman and later will play Sloan-Hendrix which is a contender in Class 2A.

“I love getting to play and see really good teams who are contenders,” he said.

When looking at the conference race, Drennan handicapped it from his coaching seat.

“It’s a new conference for me as a coach,” he said. “It’s a barrier just trying to learn the different teams and coaches.”

“This is my first year in this region,” continued Drennan when discussing the postseason options. “I don’t really know much about it. I’m excited to see what the other conference has to offer for us.”

When looking at the teams in the regional, the coach pointed to Jasper and Omaha as well as a young County Line team.

The Lady Yellow Jackets have three returning starters this year. Emma Kivell, Callie Edgmon and Paige Randall are back in the lineup.

“Emma and Callie are both knock down shooters,” said the coach. “If they have any space, it is going up and more times than not it is going in. Paige makes our team go, she is not doing a ton of scoring for us right now, but she does such a great job of creating for others. I love how Paige has really stepped up and embraced a new role that her teams needs her to do.”

Randall averaged 13 points and six rebounds a game last year. Kivell scored 10 points and had seven rebounds a contest while Edgmon scored nine points and shot 33 percent from behind the arc in the 2023-2024 season.

Rounding out the lineup will be Leelou Kilbourn and Kylee Weaver.

“Kilbourn is averaging close to eight rebounds a game for us and is hitting about 35 percent of her trey attempts,” stated Drennan. “Weaver is averaging 15 points a game and is really good at attacking the rim and she can hit the outside if she is left open.”

The Lady Yellow Jackets have several players that can play. Aslyn Cooper, Clara Huber, Lauren Fancher and Gracie Weaver will provide help for the team.

“Aslyn is our point guard off the bench and is really good at speeding up and slowing down the pace of the game,” stated Drennan. “Clara Huber is a knock down shooter who comes off the bench and always give effort and plays hard.”

“Lauren is a senior voice for our team who is always in the right spot at the right time and is a incredibly hard rebounder for her size,” stated the coach. “Gracie is a sophomore and is our team captain. That really says a lot about her personality and how the girls see her as a teammate.”

Whitlee Stacy is currently out for the foreseeable future stated the coach.

Junior High

The Kingston junior girls are starting from the ground up. They have a lot new pieces to blend together. The team is young and will grow as the season progresses.

Team members includes: Mia Palazzi; Kierra Williams; JayLee Moppin; Maycee Gates; Mesa Villines; Legacy Welch; Neveah Humphreys; and Kindle Richard.

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Small roster, big heart at Lead Hill this year

By **JEFF BRASEL**
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L EAD HILL — One thing that fans will see if they watch a Lead Hill girls contest this season — a team that plays with heart.

The school is putting a minimum roster in the books, but the squad is ready to play when the lights come on.

Andy Munday is the head coach of the team.

When asked what he liked about his team, Munday replied. “We are a team that keeps battling and we don’t give in very easily.”

When asked about the strength of the team, the coach had an easy answer.

“We have a group of players that get along with other and encourage each other to get better each day.”

The squad does have a couple of weaknesses to overcome this season.

“We currently have six on our roster, so a weakness will be lack of depth,” the coach said. “We also are inexperienced at the varsity level.”

When asked how he was going to cover his weaknesses, he replied.

“All six players will have an opportunity to play a lot of minutes allowing them to gain more varsity experience.”

The defense is still a work in progress for the Lady Tigers.

“We will be playing a multitude of defenses early on in the season,” stated Munday. “This will give us a chance to figure out what’s most effective for us.”

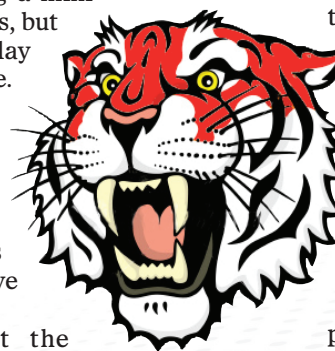
Lead Hill will be looking to get the ball into their offensive threats.

“This will be a work in progress,” said the coach.

“We will look to utilize quick hitters to get the ball into the hands of our best scorers.”

Munday handicapped the conference race.

“Jasper and Omaha should be the favorites,” he said. “You definitely can’t sleep on Kingston either with their tradition over the years.”



See **LADY TIGERS**, Page S28

Lead Hill is looking to end four-year drought

By JEFF BRASEL
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LEAD HILL — Coming into the season, Lead Hill coach Derek Rogers was only nine games away from his 200th victory at Lead Hill. That celebration should be planned for early November as the Tigers have a solid team that is ready to make noise in the 1A-1East.

Lead Hill has been to the regional tournament five years in a row, which is the longest streak of any conference team. However, it has been four years since the Tigers graced the floor of the Class 1A State Basketball Tournament. They are hoping to put an end to that this year.

When the team hits the floor, Rogers likes what he sees.

“We are deep, athletic, have good size and experience,” he said. Those characteristics makes for a successful season.

When the coach looked at the basketball skill set of his team, he was very happy.

“This team can really shoot the ball and score the ball well,” he said. “They have excellent team chemistry — probably the best I’ve had since coaching here. They have built that in a short time with a lot of new players this year.”

The coach points to a weakness that he doesn’t like to see in the team.

“At times, we depend solely on offense and don’t want to defend like we should,” he said. “We haven’t been playing together for very long with three sophomores moving up and six move ins that is a total of nine new players we are blending in and learning to play together.”

Rogers knows what it takes to remedy the problem. “The only way to cover our weaknesses is to play, play and play together,” he said. When the games start and we start playing together, I think we should get better with each game.

“Defensively, we will work that out in practice and tinkering with different defenses throughout games to see what works,” he concluded.

The coach states the team will mainly play man-to-man with a little zone and trapping when the occasion calls for it.



Lead Hill will play an up tempo five out motion style offense this season. Strength of schedule is not a problem for the Tigers. They have some strong opponents this year.

“Ozark Catholic comes to us this year,” started Rogers. They are always a challenge. We also host Valley Springs this year at our place they are always tough. We play

Flippin twice and we have a road game to Bergman against the 3A state runner-up Panthers. That should be a good measuring stick.”

The conference is full of new coaches this season, which should give every night a new look.

“Our conference is always very tough and anyone beating anyone doesn’t surprise me from night to night,” started the coach. “I think Jasper will be very good. Coach (Mike) Parker always has them in position to win the league. Kingston, Omaha, Deer and Mt. Judea have new coaches. Some of them have enough talent to give people problems every night.”

When handicapping the conference opposite the 1A-1East for the regional tournament, Rogers stated.

“We lost Ozark Catholic and The New School, both were very good teams. But the addition of Scranton and Magazine to the region will keep things tough. County Line has to be the favorite until they are beaten. They are always a very solid contender to win the state tournament.”

Rogers picked Jasper and County Line to be the

teams to watch in regional.

To get ready for the postseason, the Tigers will be matching skills in three tournaments. They will play in the Flippin, Green Forest and Northark tourneys.

Three Tigers are back from last year’s starting lineup, but one Cat will join the team a little later.

Kaden Baker, Coda Lemon and Nolan Turner are back for the team.

Baker averaged eight points, six rebounds and a block a contest.

“He is a 6-foot-4 post player that anchors the middle for us,” said the coach.

Lemon scored nine points a game had four rebounds and three steals a contest.

“He is a 6’0” guard that is extremely athletic,” said Rogers. “He is out recovering from meniscus surgery. When he gets back he should provide us with a ton of help on both ends of the court. He has a ton of heart and will be back very soon to help his team.”

Turner had five points, three assists and two steals a contest.

“He is a forward that grew four inches in the off-season,” said Rogers of the 6’2” player. “He is a stout defender and has a ton of bounce that will help us.”

Three players will count into the mix for the starting positions — Noah Royce, Dawson Lively and Brett Arnold.

“Noah will play a forward spot for us,” said the coach. “He is 6’2” that can play the guard spot as well. He can really shoot the ball. He is extremely strong and plays well inside. He can score at all three levels.

See **LEAD HILL**, Page S28

Mt. Judea girls basketball is back in business

By JEFF BRASEL
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MT. JUDEA — The Mt. Judea Lady Eagle basketball is back on the map. After not having a squad for some time, the team is back in business with 10 players wearing the blue-and-white each night.

First-year coach Chris Wilson is challenging his girls each night and they are responding to his tests. He really likes what he sees in his team.

“Technically we are young to basketball,” he said about his team. “I am having to teach things that they would have already known if they had a team. It is things that they should know. However, they are very coachable.”

Wilson likes the way the team has developed chemistry.

“They are great,” he said. “They all have a good relationship with each other on and off the court.”



Wilson also mentioned their willingness to learn. “They would run through a brick wall for me,” he said.

The team has a lot of positives in their learning stage. They need to grow up quick to cover some

weaknesses that have popped up in the early season.

“We need to make easy shots,” he said. “We have had some open looks and layups and missed them.”

See **LADY EAGLES**, Page S21

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Mt. Judea is an aggressive team

By JEFF BRASEL
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MT. JUDEA — If its aggression that fans like to see during a basketball game, then Mt. Judea is the place to visit. The Eagles will be a team that will play physical basketball and will make opponents work hard to get a shot.

Chris Wilson is the head coach of the Eagles this season.

When looking at the Eagles, opponents will see a team with good size.

“We are a nice sized team,” stated Wilson. “They are willing to listen and learn.”

Wilson is happy with the attitude that his new team has this year.

“They believe in what we are doing,” said Wilson. “They are trying to do what we need them to do.”

One of the characteristics that Wilson likes about his team.

“They are already aggressive,” he said. “That is something is instilled in them. They are a hard working group of young men.”

The coach sees other things that makes him happy when his team is playing.

“They get after the ball,” Wilson said of the his team. “It is one of the things that they do best. They also do a great job of communicating with each other especially on defense.”

When looking at the shortcomings of the team, Wilson pointed to the area he thought would be a problem.

“We lack depth,” he said. “We also may have some time when we are not shooting it well.”

Being new to the 1A-1, Wilson is not sure how the conference will shake out.

“I don’t know much about the conference,” he said. “I know that we have a few really good teams. It is a nice conference.”

Wilson pointed to his next door neighbor Jasper as being a good team and Lead Hill.

When the Eagles take the court this year, the starting lineup will be set.



The point guard will be Mason Campbell.

“He is really our only point guard,” said the coach. “He is our best ball-handler. He can shoot it. He has to get us into our offense. He can also play good defense. He is a solid player.”

Malachi Faught will be the shooting guard.

“He is our two or he can play the 3 as well,” stated the coach. “He is our secondary ball-handler. He is good playing defense. He is quick with his feet. He can shoot it.”

Grant Eddings will play the three spot.

“Grant is our small forward,” started the coach. “He is the best shooter on the team. He gives effort and he is aggressive. He must take his time and knock down his shots.”

The four and five spot will be manned by two players as they can be interchanged during the game.

“Kaidon Clayborn and Josh Criner will rotate between the forward and center spot,” Wilson said. “They are good rebounders. They are aggressive and they are not scared. They both can score.”

There will be three other players that will see time on the floor at some point during the upcoming sea-

son. Mickael Vanderpool, Dawson Bruce and Hayden Moenning will be counted on to give the starting five some breathers.

The Eagles will deploy a variety of defenses this season, but part of that will depend of timing.

“I like to mix it up,” said the coach. “We will play man and mostly a 2-3 zone. We have a 1-2-2 half-court trap. We will mix it up.”

On the offensive end, Mt. Judea will play a five out motion.

“We want to drive and penetrate for layups,” the coach said. “We also want to get out in transition.”

This season Mt. Judea will not field a junior high boys basketball team.



LADY EAGLES

Continued from Page S20

“We also lack aggression on defense,” continued the coach. “They are not communicating well. They are not talking enough.”

Despite a few weaknesses, Wilson saw a lot of bright spots with his team.

“They do a great job of moving the ball and playing together,” he said. “They pass the ball well and find the open man. We are doing a good job of moving and cutting.”

When the team is on offense, they will be running a five out motion.

Defensively, the Lady Eagles are still learning.

“For now we are doing a man and a 2-3,” he said. “We don’t have the

defensive background yet. We need to learn to adjust on the fly, but we are not there yet.”

Wilson commented on his team.

“We are still in the early stages of finding our identity and what works best for us,” he said. “I really like this group.”

The coach stated that the team will have a mixture of players that will be seeing the floor and that he is not locked

into a starting lineup yet. Any of the players could see time at any point in the game.

Team members include: Olivia Eddings; Gracie Ridenoure; Mary Smith; Myleigh Smith; Macy Williams; Melony Hendrix; Myleigh Ricketts; Caitlin Henson; Ariel Middleton; and Kloe Martin.

Mt. Judea is not fielding a junior girls team this season.

Omaha girls will be ready to challenge for 1A-1East title

Staff Report
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OMAHA — The Omaha Lady Eagles have a solid team that will be ready to continue the tradition of the school.

Last season, the squad was in the middle of the 1A-1East race and earned a trip to the state tournament.

This year the team will under the direction of a new coach.

Taking the head coaching position of the squad is David Stallman.

Stallman will have a team that has four seniors, three juniors and three sophomores.



Back for their final season at Omaha are seniors: Anna Johnson; Lauryn Moon; Molly Crouch; and Clara Alford.

Highlighting a talented junior class are Maddie Pyshny; Remington Crouch; and Peyton Matlock. The sophomores include Brooklyn Stone, Kadien Gilbert and Kandyce Tindall.

Omaha's league has been a very strong conference. For the past three seasons, the league has produced the four teams that have left the regional tournament to represent their schools in the state tournament.

See **OMAHA GIRLS**, Page S23



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New Eagle coach brings new system to Omaha

By JEFF BRASEL
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OMAHA — It is a new season and a new coach has taken the reigns at Omaha.

Garren Wynn will take the lead at Omaha and he expects big things from his squad.

Omaha made a trip to the first round of the regional tournament last season, but they are expecting more this year.

When Wynn started coaching the team, he like what he saw.

“I like how our team never gives up,” he said. “Through all obstacles, we are always fighting and clawing to win.”

When looking at his team, he can see an area that will be of concern.

“A weakness is our lack of experience,” he said. “We are a younger team.”

Wynn and the Eagles will probably use a man-to-man defense.

The coach made comments about his offensive plans.

“Our offense is a free-lance offense,” he said.

Even though he is new, the coach pointed to teams that will create trouble for his Eagles.

“Some teams to look out for on our schedule include Ozark Mountain; Valley Springs; Jasper and Lead Hill,” he said.

There has been some changes in the 1A-1East this year. That has brought the new coach excitement.

“The new conference will bring a lot of great competition, and we look forward to new opponents,” he said. “The only weakness from this is the potential for unfamiliar environments.”



The Eagles will be host their annual tournament in December.

“This will showcase great teams from local towns,” Wynn stated.

Omaha has three returning starters from last season. Noah Morrison and Jake Oliver are back and so is Sam Edwards. However, Edwards has a hand injury and will not return to the team until last December or early January.

“Noah is a bull and will be tough to stop with just how strong he is,” said the coach. “He has a great shot from the outside.”

Wynn spoke of Oliver.

“Jake possesses great size and the ability to dribble and excel at doing multiple things int he post,” said Wynn. “When Sam gets back he will provide good shooting along with an excellent ability to get to the basket and finish with contest.”

In the early season Morrison has average around 30 points a game along with 10 rebounds. Oliver is getting between 12-and 15 points a contest and eight rebounds a game.

Rounding out the lineup for the Eagles are Dawson Loveday; Gatlin Edwards;

and Winchester Edwards.

“These players bring great outside shooting, ball-handling and the ability to guard anyone,” stated the coach.

Wynn also said that Aiden Williams will bring great size and strength around the basket to the team.

Other team members include: Francisco Grant; Tucker Greenwood and Jonathan McKinney. The coach expressed how this trio will provide even more depth for the squad.

Junior High

The Junior Eagles will be a veteran team this season that has experience

from a team that finished second in the district tournament.

With two starters back and some freshman and eighth-graders that played big minutes last season, Omaha is expecting big things from the group.

Team members include: Gabe Arenas; Benjamin Badgett; Jackson Braschler; Thompson Edwards; Keshten Fickes; Zane Gass; Valentine Grant; Derek Greenwood; Colt Hagan; Jamie Hill; Ryder Larson; Cooper Liggett; Blake McAlister; Mark Taylor; Camden Veal; Dawson Yarger; Jonah Moore; and Drew Payne.



OMAHA GIRLS

Continued from Page S22

Omaha is one of those schools.

There are two new schools that have been added to the league. Arkansas School for

Advanced Studies and Founders Classical are both located in northwest Arkansas. Advanced Studies is not fielding a girls' team this season.

Traditional area schools in the league joining Omaha are: Jasper, Kingston, Lead Hill, Mt. Judea and Deer.

This year Mt. Judea has a girls squad while Deer does not have one.

Alpena, who was a member of the league last season, has moved to Class 2A.

The top four teams from the conference will play in the Class 1A Region 1 Tournament.

They will be opposite The 1A-4.

County Line, Magazine, Mulberry, St. Paul, Oark, Scranton and Western Yell Co. are the teams in the 1A-4.

Junior High

The Junior Lady Eagles will be ready for the new season.

Eight young athletes will be ready to represent the school.

Team members are: Adalyn Barber; Adilyn Blocker; Carlee Eason; Hannah Lane; Kayden Loveday; Kayli Loveday; Elezabeth McIaurin; and Emma Stuart.

Bears are running deeper this year

By JEFF BRASEL
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WESTERN GROVE — The Ozark Mountain Bears are on a mission. After a debacle in the officiating last season in the regional tournament, the Bears are ready to put that behind them. Their opponent played with six men on the court for most of the final minute scoring the winning bucket of the game during that time.

“We have been to the state tournament two of the three years I have been here,” said veteran coach Elvis Middleton. “We are going to get back this year.”

When looking at his team that he plans to use to get back, Middleton is pleased.

“We are deeper,” he said. “We have a little more quickness.”

There were also other bright spots for the coach.

“We are balanced,” he stated. “We have a variety of players. We don’t have all ones and two or fives. We have a few of each on of the positions.”

When asked about weakness of the team, the coach paused.

“We don’t make the best decisions,” he said. “To borrow a Carl Cook saying, ‘when the water runs uphill, we fall out of the boat.’”

“We are making three or four bad decisions in a row,” continued the coach explaining the team. “We have to get smarter on execution on the offensive end. We are fairly young, I am playing a lot of sophomores and juniors, that could be part of the problem.”

Looking at the conference, Middleton and Bears are in with a lot of private



schools.

“We have a lot of private schools,” started the coach. “Ozark Catholic may be at top.

Eureka Springs is young.

On any given night, you better show up and play or you can get beat.”

Middleton has several big games this season. “Valley Springs is a big one for us,” said the coach. “We go to Mammoth Spring. We play Hector and Ozark Catholic.”

The Bears will be playing in the Northark tournament as well as the Omaha Border Classic.

When approaching the opponents, the Bears will be using a variety of defenses.

“We have done some zone and some man,” the coach stated. “We have depth, so we will press at times.”

Middleton explained his offense.

“We will run some sets,” he said. “We will run a lot of motion stuff.”

The squad has four returning starters this season. Mason Gilmore; Tate Dixon; Kooper Baker; and Jake Zemlik are

were in the lineup at times during last season. Cobie Chaney started last year, but he is out with a broken foot.

“Mason is a post guy that will rebound and score on the block,” said Middleton about his 6-foot-4 interior player. “Dixon is our go-to shooter. We run a lot of things through him. He can drive well for his size.”

“Jake Zemlik has improved his shooting from last year,” said the coach. “He is a swing type kid that can play the three, four or five spot. We will swing him inside and then outside some.”

Baker is the point guard.

“He brings a lot to the court for us,” stated the coach. “He will set us up and make good decisions.”

With Chaney out, the team has turned to other players to fill the spot in the lineup.

Jacob Campbell and Sammie Riddell have been two of those players.

“Jacob is a big ole post player,” stated the coach. “He plays good interior defense. Riddell is always in on the action. He is a good rebound and he can finish. He has a good mid-range jumper or can shoot the trey.”

Ben Trammell will get some playing time. He will help us.

Middleton stated that there are several Bears that will be fighting for playing team. He pointed to Kaden Sanders; Jayden Bradshaw; Logan Sisco; T.J. Barrackey; Lucas Malli-coat; Roland Limperis; Eli Morris; and Chase Earven.

Junior High

The Junior Bears are off to a good start this season.

“We are pretty feisty,” said the coach of his team. “If we continue what we have done the last three years, We will be OK. I like this team. We should be pretty decent.”

Team members include: Tayte Jackson; Bentley Middleton; Ricky Middleton; William Bruce; Hunter Middleton; Preston Brown; Daniel Riddell; Isaiah Fletcher; Jackson Caudle; Gage Klein-art; Westin Knapp; Bentlee Freeman; Caleb Wheeler; Donnie Flud; Skipper Bright; Kyler Morris; Jesse Morris; William Hunter; K.J. Keymer; Hayden Akins; Levi Honeycutt; Jackson Cross; Gavin Smith; and Billy Eli.

Every position at Ozark Mountain has strength

By JEFF BRASEL
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WESTERN GROVE—The Ozark Mountain Lady Bears are ready for the new season.

After an early departure from the regional tournament last year, the team is ready to get the back taste out of its mouth.

Kelsey Hudson, head coach of the Lady Bears, is ready to put her product on the floor.

“I have a great group of girls,” she said of her team. “They are hard working and have the drive to win. This is a very fun group to be around.”

When looking at her team, she was quick to find strong points.

“I feel that we have strengths in all five positions,” she said. “I have players that can step into any position and role. Some of the girls will be asked to play multiple positions and different roles throughout the game.”

The coach found a weakness of her squad.

“We are overall a young team, only having one senior this year,” she said. “But all of the girls on the team have been in high level games and have each competed for a district title two of the last three years in either junior or senior high.

“I feel like we have great experience in postseason play and I hope that pays off for us and helps us overcome being a young team,” she concluded.

The Lady Bears will base their defense out of a man, but they will mix in some zone depending on the game and who their opponent will be.

On offense Hudson has a plan.

“We will run a motion style offense,” she said. “This group has the tools to play uptempo and score out of transition, but we also know how to slow it down and run sets.”

The Lady Bears will be hitting the road a lot this year in league play.

“We have some new teams this year and will be traveling a lot to Northwest Arkansas,” said the coach. Alpena is back in 2A, so that will give us a familiar team that we will have to be looking out for this season. Lifeway Christian will also be a team we need to keep our eye on down the stretch.”

Hudson looked to Mountainburg as to watch for in the regional tournament.



Prepping for the postseason starts in the beginning of the year for Ozark Mountain. The squad is in the Omaha tournament as well as the North Arkansas College Tournament.

Ozark Mountain has two returning starters this season for the Lady Bears.

“Kelly Middleton and Kierra Kleinert are our returning starters from last year,” said Hudson. “Both Kelly and Kierra will be called on to run the point position.”

Hudson talked about their attributes.

“Kelly has good speed when attacking the rim and has shown growth in her outside shot. Kierra will be asked to play the point or shooting guard position. Kierra led the team in scoring last season averaging around 10 points a game.”

Also back for the team is Brooklynn Tennison.

“She will be back in the post position this year,” said Hudson. “She has worked hard on her mid-range jumper and outside shot this offseason.”

When asked who would round out the lineup, Hudson replied. “Any given night, we could change up our starting lineup to have a different look and I don’t feel like that would change our momentum.”

Jasmine Fletcher, MaHaley Gilmore, Hannah Wheeler, Maci Brumley and Brooklynn Cunningham could hear their names called in the starting lineup.

The coach gave the scouting report on each player.

“MaHaley gives us a different look in transition than we have had the last couple of years. She brings us energy on both ends of the court.

“Jasmine will be key in our zone defense,” continued the coach. “She has great length and is getting better at getting a hand on the ball defensively.”

Hudson continued her praise of her players.

“Maci has shown so much growth on the offensive end,” observed the coach. “She is a tough defender that will be asked to take care of the hard defensive assignments. Brooklynn will be playing in the post this season. She has worked on her inside game and has shown improvement with her post moves.

“Brooklynn will be playing in the post this season,” continued Hudson. “She has worked on her inside game and has shown improvement with her post moves.”

Chloe Marshall, Paige Hunter and Dana Smith round out the roster. These three will be pushing for minutes on the court as the season progresses.

“These girls have worked hard this preseason and we are hopeful for another successful year,” concluded Hudson.

Junior High

Members of the Ozark Mountain Junior Lady Bear team include: Brilee Keymer; Ashley Ricketts; Olivia Weatherly; Zoey Wyatt; Havannah Greenhaw; Macy Middleton; Emma Tennison; Nina Cross; Chyanne Phipps; Myla Anderson; Jayden Applegate; K’Dance Smith; RaeLynn Groves; Jasey Smith; Kelsey Tennison; Kylee Smith; and Emily Wheeler.

The team is coached by Miranda Gilmore.

Valley Springs will bring a lot of depth to games

By JEFF BRASEL
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VALLEY SPRINGS — The Valley Springs Tigers didn't advance to the Class 3A State Basketball Tournament last season. That is something the team is determine to correct this year.

Valley Springs lost a heartbreaker in the first round of the regional tournament last season and the taste that it left has lingered.

When looking at his team, head coach Jarred Osnes likes what he sees.

"I think this team is deeper than previous years," he said. "We shoot the ball well and can be more multiple with lineups. This team has taken strides defensively over the spring/summer/fall that will be able to win us games this winter."

When asked what was the strength of his team, Osnes stated, "depth, shooting and guard play."

Looking at the team photo will reveal what the coach perceives as a weakness.

"We don't have a ton of size outside of a couple kids," he said.

The coach has a plan to combat the height problem. "We will increase the pace of play and show multiple looks defensively," he said.

Valley Springs will base their defensive approach from a man-to-man status.

"We play about 75-80 percent man-to-man," the coach said. "But, we will play a matchup zone off of it."

Offensively the team will play a mix between Princeton and some halfcourt sets.

When looking at his schedule, Osnes saw a tough group of games from several classifications.

The team will play three Class 5A teams in Farmington, Pea Ridge and Beebe. They will face Berryville, Huntsville and Elkins in Class 4A and Jasper and Ozark Catholic from 1A and 2A.

Valley Springs has been moved to the 3A-2. It is going to be a tough road for all teams.

"The new conference has become a gauntlet," said Osnes. "Anybody will be able to beat anybody. I think it will be a race to 11 wins for the conference champion. It will be a test every night in the league, so the teams that can stay healthy and avoid injuries will be in good position."

The regional tournament is now much harder for a team out of the 3A-2.



"We have to find a way to get in the regional then take it one game at a time," said Osnes. "Our conference and non-conference schedule will prepare us for postseason play."

The coach pointed to Bergman, Flippin, Melbourne, Manila, Osceola, Newport, Rivercrest and Harrisburg as teams to look for in the tournament.

Valley Springs will play in the Northark Border Wars against Norwood, Mo. and in the Lendel Thomas Classic in Harrison. The team will close in tournament season with the Northark tourney.

Valley Springs returns two starters from last season — Keyton Carnahan and Logan Avery.

"Carnahan is extremely talented player that can score at all three levles," said Osnes. "He really understands the game. he is making the transition to point guard and I think that will really bring out his strengths as a player. He has gotten a lot stronger over the off-season. I think he is primed for an All-State season."

Osnes spoke over Avery.

"He is the emotional leader of our team," he said. "He is the definition of a winner. He competes and finds ways to impact winning. He has become a consistent scorer and affects the game on both ends of the floor. He will also be in the discussion for All-State/All-Conference."

Last season Carnahan averaged 13.6 points a game along with 4.8 assists and 2.1 steals. Avery got 11.1 points a game a 5.8 rebounds a contest.

When it came to selecting the remainder of the starters, Osnes stated.

"We will probably use a few different starting lineups. Our next five or six that could see starter minutes are good players."

The coach pointed to Kaedon Roberts; Parker Spaw; Camden Fredlund; Dalton Lair; Isaac Garvin; and J.P. Cerqueira.

"Roberts is a long, athletic forward," started the coach. "He shoots the ball well and can stretch the defense. He continues to get better every day. He flies around defensively and is always making stuff happen.

He is a physical defender and tough competitor."

Osnes spoke of Spaw.

"He played a big role off of the bench last year. He has really developed his game and has become our secondary ball handler. He has become a consistent shooter which rounds out his game, He defends really well, and acts as a spark plug for our team."

Fredlund is another long forward.

"He is lanky," said Osnes of the forward. "He is a really good defender. He shoots the ball well and make really good decisions. He fits well into what we try to do as a team, and he wants to win."

Lair is a new student to Valley Springs.

"He is a sophomore from Alpena," said the coach. "He has gotten better every day since stepping on campus. He is a really good shooter that has developed scoring at all three levels."

Garvin is a lengthy guard. The coach says that has become a scoring threat and an elite defender.

Cerqueira will be a presence in the post.

"He is a 6-foot-8 foreign exchange student from Brazil," said Osnes. "He is thick and a physical post. He has a really good 15-foot shot. He is a big force on the defensive end."

Osnes stated the team is full of players that will see the floor this year. He mentioned Zayd Yount; Jhett Melton; Ayden Holt; James Cone; Jensen Spoeers; Grant Bennett; Kasen Bolin; Brennan Greenhaw; Jared Wilson and Dante Wilson as players to fight for playing time.

Junior High

Osnes really likes the bright future that he sees in the Junior Tigers.

"Our junior high is really talented and plays extremely hard," he said. "They will have a chance to compete for a conference championship this year. We return a lot of impactful players."

The team members include: Thatcher Hartman; Braxton Morgan; Brady Karr; Westin Bryant; Aiden Fredlund; Sawyer Hartman; Colter Cantrell; Gavin Byrd; Emmett Moore; Logan Fredlund; Quincy Johnson; Quinn Melton; Damien Derosier; Lane Nelson; Gavyn Holt; Hunter Dodson; Josh Cothran; and Greysen Spears.

Lady Tigers under new management

By JEFF BRASEL
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VALLEY SPRINGS — The Valley Springs Lady Tigers have been a staple in the Class 3A State Basketball Tournament. The squad is looking for a deep run this season.

Leading the team this year is a Valley Springs graduate, Dawson Yates. Yates comes to Valley Springs after being a women's assistant coach at Harding University.

Yates walks into a program that has some experience returning and other attributes that coaches like to see in a team.

"We are competitive, cohesive group who bleeds green," he said of his team.

When looking at the strength of his team he pointed to something that he sees.

"Senior leadership and a strong desire to develop," he said.

When asked what was going to be the weakness of the team, Yates joked. "A first year head coach."

He stated to overcome the team weakness that the team would "compete, be great teammates and lean on our standards."

The Lady Tigers will be putting many defensive options on the table.

"The plan is to guard the ball," stated Yates. "So, whatever it takes to stop the ball at the point of attack."

Yates elaborates about his team's offense.

"Anything that allows our most talented players to generate points for our team," he said.

When looking at the league schedule, Yates was quick to talk about the conference.

"The entire 3A-2 conference," he said when asked who to watch out for in conference play. "The league is full of basketball tradition."

When looking at the new conference, he stated.

"I love the new conference," he said. "There are three problems — good coaches, talented players and home court advantages."

The league will travel to northeast Arkansas for regional play.

"There are at least six teams in our region that think they should play in Hot Springs in March," he said. "Our region will be battle tested for the state tournament."



When asked who the teams were, he replied.

"Everyone knows who those teams are," he quipped. "The same powerhouses from decades before."

The Lady Tigers will be playing in three tournaments this year. They will play in Clinton in November, Pea Ridge during Christmas and the 50th Northark Tournament.

Valley Springs has two returning starters.

"Tayla Trammell and Macy Willis are our returners," he said. "Both are experienced and talented basketball players. Nevertheless, their strengths are their character, their love for Valley Springs and ownership in our basketball program."

Junior Laramie Watkins "has solidified her spot in the lineup," said the coach. "Her versatility and skill will be vital in our team's progression this season."

Yates stated that he doesn't know who else will be starting.

"That will be determined soon," he said. "With only 10 on the roster, we need everyone to be a key contributor. With that being said, everyone is much improved from when I was hired in May."

The other seven players that are in the hunt include: Violet Gamez; Ava Johnson; Olivai Keeter; Katie Riggins; Raylee Rodman; Reece Williams; and Jada Wray."

Yates gave appreciation to four students.

"I can not forget our four managers, Allie Kindall, Regan Helams; Macy Deaton; and Kadee Robinson," he said. "Their attitude and effort is vital for our team morale."

Junior High

Yates is pleased with his junior high team.

"I love our junior high and seventh-grade teams," he said. "They complete. Both teams have a lot of people playing basketball, and are developing every day. I am thrilled for their future."

Team members include: Landrie Jones; Sophie Smith; Kylin Carter; Greta Graddy; Sofia Groves; Ressa Horton; Myrissa Johnson; Klaylen Kimbrell; Blair Kindall; Audrey Linn; Mia Martin; Makenna Mill-sap; Ava Pickett; Kaylee Shelton; Oaklee Williams; and Emmy Novak.

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ALPENA

Continued from Page S8

“We run several continuity offenses and space the floor with a five out or four out and one in.” he stated.

Alpena has several key games throughout the season.

“We don’t have any hand me out weeks,” stated Kilgore. “We will battle each night against really good teams. We hope to use this to build us up for when conference play comes around.”

Kilgore likes the new conference where the Leopards have landed. The team will play against other Class 2A teams from across the northwest portion of Arkansas.

To get prepared for the conference season, the Leopards will be playing in the Flippin, North Arkansas College and Lincoln tournaments and classics.

The Leopards could have a different look each night in the starting lineup.

Slade Harp; Keaton Toliver; Jaxon Woods; Dylan Adams, Alex Ragland along with Brodie Berry, Donovan Berry and David Tumbleson.



DEER

Continued from Page S12

Canyon Lasater is a true athletic.

“He is as good of an athlete as there is in Newton County,” the coach stated.

“He is fast and jumps well. He will play some point. He will be good at reading and reacting.”

Lane Nichols will be a starter for the Antlers.

“He will be our starting point guard,” Johnson said. “He is quick. He takes care of the basketball. He will get the ball where it needs to be. He is a good on-ball defender.”

Dillon Young is another solid player for the Antlers.

“He is 6’3” and 250 pounds,” started the coach. He has a high basketball IQ. He really understands the game. He can step out and shoot it.”

Jesse Gunter can see time as a starter for Deer.

“He has a lot of experience,” stated the coach of his player. “He is a good shooter. We will rely on his experience. He brings a sense of stability to our team.”

Wyatt Gilmore is a sophomore that is around 6’2”.

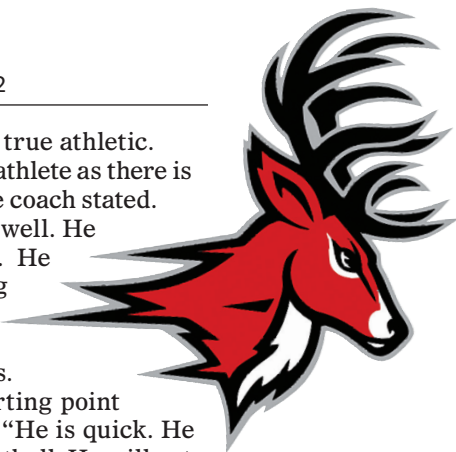
“He is really long and a very good defender,” said Johnson. “He can score, but he hangs his hat on being the defensive guy. He is great at grabbing rebounds.”

Mason Casey is a junior that will be out this season with an injury.

Junior High

The Junior Antlers have nine players this season with six of those being young.

With three older players, the team will be a work in progress this season as the seventh-graders learn the game.



LADY TIGERS

Continued from Page S18

The conference is very familiar to Lead Hill.

“The majority of the teams in our conference are familiar opponents,” the coach said. “I don’t foresee any problems. You just have to be ready to compete each night.”

Getting to the regional tournament is a goal for the Lady Tigers.

“We will continue to do what we do,” Munday said. “We will take it one day at a time to better ourselves on the court and if we are fortunate enough to be in the regional tournament, we will look for ways to be competitive and give ourselves a chance to win.”

The Lady Tigers have one part-time starter back this year.

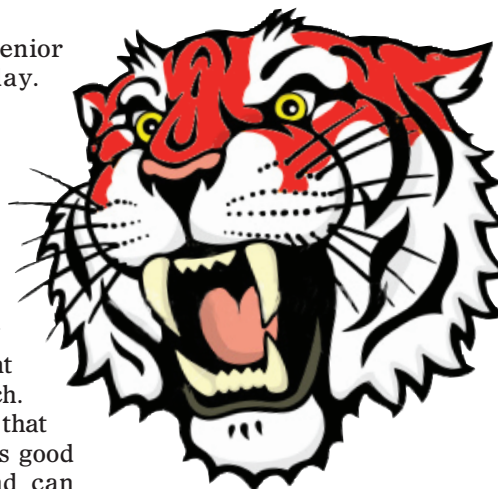
“Aubrey Wilson is a senior forward,” said Munday.

“We will look for some senior leadership from Aubrey this season.”

The coach spoke of the remainder of his lineup.

“The rest of our lineup will consist of Tesli Johnson, Averi Smith, Kieya Egger, Kendra Wagner and Elizabeth Harmon,” he said. Teslier is a junior wing/forward who will give us a much needed presence inside and on the perimeter. She is very competitive and a skilled players. We are looking for big things out of Tesli.

“Averi Smith is a sophomore who brings good effort each day to practice and is a solid defender,” continued the coach. “Kayla, Kendra and Elizabeth continue to improve on their game and as the season goes on, I expect each of



LEAD HILL

Continued from Page S19

“Lively will run the point for us,” continued the coach. “He is a very smart guard that can hand the ball. He has good size for the position and can shoot the three consistently.”

Arnold brings solid play to the game for the team.

“He is a very good defensive guard that can play the point or shooting guard position,” said Rogers. “He has really improved as a shooter and can score in bunches. He works extremely hard and I look for him to start at the shooting guard spot for us this year.”

Rogers looks at four other players to play big roles for the Tigers this year.

“D.J. Evans is a big bodied post player that is extremely athletic for his size at 6’3”, 240 pounds,” commented the coach. “He can really get up and down the floor and jumps well. He is a good shooter for his size and he

plays physical.”

Hagen Hayes is a 6’1” guard.

“He can do anything I ask him to do,” said Rogers. He plays hard on both ends of the court and has a pretty shot. He provides depth at almost every spot —1-4.”

Landon Henson can step in and play the point guard spot or the shooting guard spot.

Will Grozis is a defensive forward that got playing time last year by doing all the little things that his team needs.

Rogers feels that his team does stop there. There are other players that he sees fighting for time on the floor. Carter Rogers, Dylan Franco, Tanner Middleton and Tyler Franco all will provide depth for the team.

these players to contribute to our success.”

Junior High

Munday is seeking improvement out of the Junior Lady Tigers.

“The junior high team continues to improve,” he stated. “This group of girls have the will and want to get better each day. The junior high squad should be a fun group to watch as they season progresses.”

He continued with his thoughts on the team.

“Continuing to to build confidence on the court and maintaining a competitive edge should come with more experience,” he said.

Team members include: Kennedy Hudson; Hattie Hughes; Carly Austin; Corban Solis; Paisley Jenkins; Cheyenne Wren; Taytum Martin; Mahayla Hardman; Alexis Dean; and Sofia Wilson.

Junior High

The ball didn’t bounce the Junior Tigers ways last season. With pretty much the same team back, the coach is looking forward to a successful new season.

“We are pretty much the same team as last year,” said Rogers. “We really worked hard on skill development and hit the weight room in the off-season to get stronger.

“Our strengths should be experience, shooting and guard play and I think the future will look very bright for this bunch,” Rogers concluded.

Team members include: Tucker Middleton; Jacob Francis; Gage Campbell; James Mancinelli; Fender Berlin; Garrett Richardson; Elijah Criger; Easton Hardman; Grayden Collins; Jeremiah Springer; Huckleberry Hughes; Luke Mistler; Wyatt Connery; Luke Hopkins; and Matthew Grinder.



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ALPENA SCHEDULE



DATE	OPPONENT	TEAMS	TIME
OCTOBER			
26-Nov. 2	Jasper Tourney	1,2	TBA
29	@Flippin	1,2,3,4	4:30
NOVEMBER			
1	Valley Springs	1,2,3,4	4:30
5	Kingston	1,2,3,4	4:30
8	@Cotter	1,3,4	5:30
12	Bergman	1,2,3,4	4:30
15	@Omaha	1,2,3,4	4:30
16-23	Flippin Tourney	3,4	TBA
19	@Yellville-Summit	1,2,5,6	4:30
22	Timbo	1,2,3,4	4:30
23	Lincoln Classic	3	TBA
25	Lincoln Classic	3,4	TBA
DECEMBER			
3	Flippin	1,2,5,6	4:30
6-7	Drew Central Classic	3,4	TBA
10	Deer	2,4	5
12	@Marshall	1,2,5,6	4:30
14	Berryville Jamboree	5,6	TBA
17	@Ozark Mountain	1,3,4	5
19	Berryville	1,2,5,6	4:30
JANUARY			
2-4	NAC Tourney	3,4	TBA
7	@Lifeway Christian	2,3,4	5
9	Ozark Catholic	2,3,4	5
10	@Eureka Springs	1,3,4	5
14	Decatur	2,3,4	5
16	Lead Hill	1,2,3,4	4:30
18-25	Alpena Tourney	1,2	TBA
24	@Ozark Catholic	3,4,4B	5
28	Ozark Mountain	2,3,4	5
31	Lifeway Christian	1,3,4	5
FEBRUARY			
1	Berryville Jamboree	5,6	TBA
4	Eureka Springs	2,3,4	5
7	@Decatur	1,3,4	5
10-15	District Tourney	1,2	TBA
11	@Cedar Ridge	3,4	5
14	Eagle Hights	3,4	5
17-22	District Tourney	3,4	TBA
26-Mar. 1	Regional Tourney	3,4	TBA
MARCH			
4-8	State Tourney	3,4	TBA
13-15	State Finals	3,4	TBA

1- Jr. Girls 2-Jr. Boys 3-Sr. Girls 4-Sr. Boys 5-Seventh Girls 6-Seventh Boys

BERGMAN SCHEDULE



DATE	OPPONENT	TEAMS	TIME
OCTOBER			
26- Nov. 2	Jasper Tourney	1,2	TBA
29	@Jasper	3,4,4B	5
NOVEMBER			
1	Kingston	1,2,3,4	4
7	@Lead Hill	1,2,5,6	5
8	Providence Academy	2,4,6	5:30
9	Jasper Tourney	5,6	TBA
9-14	Lead Hill Tourney	1,2	TBA
12	@Alpena	1,2,3,4	4:30
15	Lead Hill	3,4,4B	5
18	Berryville	1,2,5,6	4:30
19	@Fort Smith North	1,3	5
21-26	Bergman Classic	3,4	TBA
DECEMBER			
5	@Yellville	5,6	5
5-7	Flippin Tourney	3	TBA
6-7	Drew Central Classic	4	TBA
9	@Valley Springs	1,2,5,6	4:30
9-14	Green Forest Tourney	4	TBA
10	Mountain View	1,3,4	5
12-14	Tourney of Champs	3	TBA
17	@Cave City	1,3,4	5
19	@Cotter	1,2,5,6	5
20	Salem	2,3,4	5
26-28	Harrison Tourney	3,4	TBA
JANUARY			
4	Russellville Classic	3,4	TBA
7	@Flippin	1,3,4,4B	5
10	@Yellville	2,3,4,4B	5
13	Green Forest	5,6	5
14	Valley Springs	1,3,4,4B	4:30
16	@Flippin	1,2,5,6	4:30
17	@Mountain View	2,3,4	5
18-25	Alpena Tourney	1,2	TBA
21	Melbourne	1,3,4	5
24	Cave City	2,3,4	5
28	@Salem	1,3,4	5
30	@Melbourne	1,2,5,6	4:30
31	Flippin	2,3,4,4B	5
FEBRUARY			
4	Yellville	1,3,4,4B	5
7	@Valley Springs	2,3,4,4B	4:30
8-15	District Tourney	1,2	TBA
11	@Melbourne	3,4	5
14	@Rose Bud	3,4	5
15-22	District Tourney	3,4	TBA
26-Mar. 1	Regional Tourney	3,4	TBA
MARCH			
4-8	State Tourney	3,4	TBA
13-15	State Finals	3,4	TBA

1- Jr. Girls 2-Jr. Boys 3-Sr. Girls 4-Sr. Boys 5-Seventh Girls 6-Seventh Boys

DEER SCHEDULE



DATE	OPPONENT	TEAMS	TIME
OCTOBER			
29	@Sacred Heart	2,4	5
NOVEMBER			
11	@Harrison Homeschool	2,4	5
14	@St. Paul	2,4	5
18	Lamar	2,4	5
21	Two Rivers	2,4	5
25	@Danville	2,4	5
DECEMBER			
3	Oark	2,4	5
6	@Lead Hill	2,4	5
10	@Alpena	2,4	5
12	@Mt. Judea	2,4	5
16	Jasper	2,4	5
17	Kingston	2,4	5:30
19	@Haas Hall	2,4	5:30
JANUARY			
7	@SAS	2,4	5
10	@Founders Classical	2,4	5
13	Harrison Homeschool	2,4	5
14	Omaha	2,4	5
17	Lead Hill	2,4	5
21	@Jasper	2,4	5
23	Mt. Judea	2,4	5
28	@Kingston	2,4	5:30
31	SAS	2,4	5
FEBRUARY			
4	Founders Classical	2,4	5
7	Omaha	2,4	5
10-14	District Tourney	2	TBA
17-22	District Tourney	4	TBA
26-Mar. 1	Regional Tourney	4	TBA
MARCH			
4-8	State Tourney	4	TBA
13-15	State Finals	4	TBA

1- Jr. Girls 2-Jr. Boys 3-Sr. Girls 4-Sr. Boys 5-Seventh Girls 6-Seventh Boys



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JASPER SCHEDULE



DATE	OPPONENT	TEAMS	TIME
OCTOBER			
26-Nov. 2	Jasper Tourney	1,2	TBA
29	Bergman	3,4,4B	5
NOVEMBER			
1	Shirley	1,3,4	5
4	Flippin	1,2,5,6	5
5	Valley Springs	1,2,3,4	4:30
7	Mt. Judea	3,4	5
9	Jasper Tourney	5,6	TBA
11-14	Marshall Tourney	1,2	TBA
12	Norfolk	1,3,4	5
15	Harrison Homeschool	2,3,4	5
18-23	Clinton Tourney	3,4	TBA
22	Farmington	1,2,6,6B	4:30
25	Bergman Classic	3,4	TBA
DECEMBER			
2	@Bergman	1,2,5,6	5
2-7	Omaha Tourney	3,4	TBA
9	Dover	1,2,5,6	4:30
10	Marshall	1,2,3,4	4:30
12	@Eureka Springs	1,3,4	4:30
13	School of AR Studies	2,4	4:30
14	Berryville Tourney	5,6	TBA
16	@Deer	4	5
17	@Founders Classical	1,2,3,4	4:30
19	Rogers Heritage	3,3B	4:30
JANUARY			
2-4	NAC Tourney	3,4	TBA
7	@Omaha	1,2,3,4	4:30
9	@Valley Springs	1,5	5
10	Lead Hill	1,2,3,4	4:30
13	@Mt. Judea	3,4	5
14	@Kingston	1,2,3,4	4:30
18	Green Forest Tourney	5,6	TBA
18-25	Alpena Tourney	1,2	TBA
21	Deer	4	5
24	@School of Ar Studies	2,4	4:30
27	@Lamar	3,3B,4,4B	4:30
28	Founders Classical	1,2,3,4	4:30
31	Omaha	1,2,3,4	4:30
FEBRUARY			
1	Flippin Tourney	3B,4B	TBA
4	@Lead Hill	1,2,3,4	4:30
7	Kingston	1,2,3,4	4:30
8	Huntsville Tourney	5,6	TBA
10-13	District Tourney	1,2	TBA
11	@Cotter	3,4	5
17-21	District Tourney	3,4	TBA
24-Mar. 1	Regional Tourney	3,4	TBA
MARCH			
3-8	State Tourney	3,4	TBA
13-15	State Finals	3,4	TBA

1- Jr. Girls 2-Jr. Boys 3-Sr. Girls 4-Sr. Boys 5-Seventh Girls 6-Seventh Boys

KINGSTON SCHEDULE



DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME
OCTOBER			
26-Nov. 2	Jasper Tourney	1,2	TBA
28	@Flippin	1,2,3,4	4
NOVEMBER			
1	@Bergman	1,2,3,4	4
5	@Alpena	1,2,3,4	4:30
9-14	Lead Hill Tourney	1,2	TBA
12	Ozark Mountain	1,2,3,4	4:30
14	Huntsville	1,2,4,6	4:30
16-23	Flippin Tourney	3,4	TBA
26	Bergman Classic	3	TBA
DECEMBER			
3	West Fork	1,2,3,4	4
5	Valley Springs	1,3	5
6	@Founders Classical	1,2,3,4	4:30
7-14	Green Forest Tourney	3,4	TBA
10	@Mt. Judea	3,4	5:30
13	Omaha	1,2,3,4	4:30
17	@Deer	2,4	5:30
JANUARY			
2-4	Calico Rock Tourney	3,4	TBA
7	Lead Hill	1,2,3,4	4:30
10	School for Advanced Studies	2,4	5:30
14	Jasper	1,2,3,4	4:30
17	Founders Classical	1,2,3,4	4:30
18-25	Alpena Tourney	1,2	TBA
21	Mt. Judea	3,4	5:30
24	@Omaha	1,2,3,4	4:30
28	Deer	2,4	5:30
31	@Lead Hill	1,2,3,4	4:30
FEBRUARY			
4	@School for Advanced Studies	2,4	5:30
7	@Jasper	1,2,3,4	4:30
8	Huntsville Tourney	5,6	TBA
10-15	District Tourney	1,2	TBA
11	Yellville-Summit	3,4	6
14	Eureka Springs	3,4	6
17-22	District Tourney	3,4	TBA
24-Mar. 1	Regional Tourney	3,4	TBA
MARCH			
4-8	State Tourney	3,4	TBA
13-15	State Finals	3,4	TBA

1- Jr. Girls 2-Jr. Boys 3-Sr. Girls 4-Sr. Boys 5-Seventh Girls 6-Seventh Boys



LEAD HILL SCHEDULE



DATE	OPPONENT	TEAMS	TIME
OCTOBER			
29	Cotter	1,3,4	5
NOVEMBER			
1	@Eureka Springs	1,2,3,4	4
4	Ozark Catholic	2,3,4,4B	4:30
7	Bergman	1,2,5,6	5
8	@Flippin	2,3,4	5:30
9-14	Lead Hill Tourney	1,2	TBA
12	Yellville-Summit	3,4	5:30
15	@Bergman	3,4,4B	5
16-23	Flippin Tourney	3,4	TBA
22	Valley Springs	1,2,3,4	4
DECEMBER			
2	Flippin	1,3,4	5:30
3	Calico Rock	1,3,4	5
5	Deer	2,4	5:30
7-14	Green Forest Tourney	3,4	TBA
10	@School of Advancement	4	6
13	Founders Classical	1,2,3,4	4:30
17	@Omaha	1,2,3,4	4:30
19	@Harrison Homeschool	1,2,3,4	4
JANUARY			
2-4	Northark Tourney	3,4	TBA
7	@Kingston	1,2,3,4	4:30
9	School of the Ozarks	3,4	5:30
10	@Jasper	1,2,3,4	4:30
13	Marshall	1,2,5,6	5
14	Mt. Judea	3,4	5:30
16	@Alpena	1,2,3,4	4:30
17	@Deer	2,4	5:30
18-25	Alpena Tourney	1,2,	TBA
21	School of Advancement	4	6
23	Harrison Homeschool	1,2,3,4	4
24	@Founders Classical	1,2,3,4	4:30
28	Omaha	1,2,3,4	4:30
31	Kingston	1,2,3,4	4:30
FEBRUARY			
4	Jasper	1,2,3,4	4:30
6	@Mt. Judea	3,4	5:30
7	@Marshall	1,2,3,4	4
10-14	District Tourney	1,2	TBA
11	@Ozark Mountain	3,4	5:30
14	@Cotter	3,4	5
17-22	District Tourney	3,4	TBA
26-Mar. 1	Regional Tourney	3,4	TBA
MARCH			
4-8	State Tourney	3,4	TBA
13-15	State Finals	3,4	TBA

1- Jr. Girls 2-Jr. Boys 3-Sr. Girls 4-Sr. Boys 5-Seventh Girls 6-Seventh Boys

MT. JUDEA SCHEDULE



DATE	OPPONENT	TEAMS	TIME
OCTOBER			
28	@St. Paul	3,4	5
30	@Haas Hall Academy	3,4	5:30
NOVEMBER			
4	Harrison Home School	3,4	5:30
7	@Jasper	3,4	5
12	Haas Hall Academy	3,4	5:30
14	Eureka Springs	3,4	5:30
16-23	Arvest Tourney	3,4	TBA
DECEMBER			
2	@Harrison Home School	3,4	5:30
10	Kingston	3,4	5:30
12	Deer	4	5:30
17	@School for Advanced Studies	4	5:30
20	@Oak	3,4	5
JANUARY			
7	Founders Classical Academy	3,4	5:30
9	Omaha	3,4	5
13	Jasper	3,4	5
14	@Lead Hill	3,4	5:30
21	@Kingston	3,4	5:30
23	@Deer	4	5:30
28	School for Advanced Studies	4	5:30
30	@Founders Classical Academy	3,4	5:30
FEBRUARY			
4	@Omaha	3,4	5
6	@Lead Hill	3,4	5:30
11	St. Paul	3,4	5
17-21	District Tourney	3,4	TBA
24-Mar. 1	Regional Tourney	3,4	TBA
MARCH			
3-8	State Tourney	3,4	TBA
13-15	State Finals	3,4	TBA

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OMAHA SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TEAMS	TIME
NOVEMBER			
1	Ozark Mountain	1,2,3,4	4:30
5	Calico Rock	1,2,3,4	4:30
8	@Valley Springs	2,3,4	5:30
12	@Providence Academy	3	6:30
12	@Providence Academy	4	7:30
9-14	@Lead Hill Tourney	1,2	TBA
15	Alpena	1,2,3,4	4:30
19	Marshall	1,2	5
DECEMBER			
2	Omaha Tourney	3,4	TBA
10	Founders Academy	1,2,3,4	4:30
13	@Kingston	1,2,3,	4 4:30
17	Lead Hill	1,2,3,4	4:30
19	Marshall	1,2,3,4	4:30
JANUARY			
2-4	@NorthArk Tourney	3,4	TBA
7	Jasper	1,2,3,4	4:30
9	@Mt. Judea	3,4	5
16	AR School Adv. Studies	2,4	5
14	@Deer	4	6
18-25	@Alpena Tourney	1,2	TBA
21	@Founders Academy	1,2,3,4	4:30
24	Kingston	1,2,3,4	4:30
28	@Lead Hill	1,2,3,4	4:30
31	@Jasper	1,2,3,4	4:30
FEBRUARY			
4	Mt. Judea	3,4	5
7	Deer	2,4	5
10-14	District Tourney	1,2	TBA
11	Timbo	3,4	5:30
17-22	District Tourney	3,4	TBA
26-Mar. 1	Regional Tourney	3,4	TBA
MARCH			
4-8	State Tourney	3,4	TBA
13-15	State Finals	3,4	TBA

1- Jr. Girls 2-Jr. Boys 3-Sr. Girls 4-Sr. Boys 5-Seventh Girls 6-Seventh Boys

OZARK MOUNTAIN SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	TEAMS	TIME
OCTOBER			
28	Timbo	2,3,4	5
29	Harrison Eagle Heights	1,2,3,4	5
NOVEMBER			
1	@Omaha	1,2,3,4	4:30
5	Viola	1,3,4	5
8	@Mammoth Spring	2,3,4	5
12	@Kingston	1,2,3,4	4:30
15	@Green Forest	1,2,3,4	4
16-23	Huntsville Tourney	1,2	TBA
19	@Valley Springs	1,2,3,4	4
22	Marshall	1,2,3,4	5
DECEMBER			
2-7	Omaha Tourney	3,4	TBA
6	@Hector	1,1B,2,2B	4:30
10	@Lifeway Christian	1,3,4	5
12	Hector	3,4	5
14	Berryville Tourney	1B,2B	TBA
17	Alpena	1,3,4	5
20	Ozark Catholic	2,3,4	5
JANUARY			
2-4	NAC Tourney	3,4	TBA
2	Harrison Eagle Heights	1,2,3,4	4:30
7	@Decatur	2,3,4	5
10	New School	2,3,4	5
11	Ozark Mountain Tourney	1,1B,2,2B	TBA
14	@Eureka Springs	2,3,4	5
16	@Timbo	1,3	5
17	@Ozark Catholic	2,3,4	5
18-25	Alpena Tourney	1,2	TBA
21	Lifeway Christian	2,3,4	5
24	@Haas Hall Rogers	1,3,4	5
28	@Alpena	2,3,4	5
30	@Marshall	1,1B,2,2B	5
31	Decatur	1,3,4	5
FEBRUARY			
4	@Rural Special	2,3,4	5
7	Eureka Springs	1,3,4	5
10-13	District Tourney	1,2	TBA
11	Lead Hill	3,4	5:30
14	Timbo	3,4	5
17-21	District Tourney	3,4	TBA
24-Mar. 1	Regional Tourney	3,4	TBA
MARCH			
3-8	State Tourney	3,4	TBA
13-15	State Finals	3,4	TBA

1- Jr. Girls 2-Jr. Boys 3-Sr. Girls 4-Sr. Boys 5-Seventh Girls 6-Seventh Boys



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VALLEY SPRINGS SCHEDULE



DATE	OPPONENT	TEAMS	TIME
OCTOBER			
26-Nov. 2	Jasper Tourney	1,2	TBA
NOVEMBER			
1	@Alpena	1,2,3,4	4:30
4	Maumelle Charter	2,4B,6	5
5	@Jasper	1,2,3,4	4:30
8	Omaha	2,3,4	5:30
11	@Farmington	1,2,5,6	4
15	@Sloan-Hendrix	3,4	5
16	Harrison Tourney	5,6	TBA
18-23	Clinton Tourney	3	TBA
19	Ozark Mountain	1,2,3,4	4
21	@Berryville	1,2,3,4	4:30
22	@Lead Hill	1,2,3,4	4
23	Berryville Tourney	5,6	TBA
23	Bergman Classic	4	TBA
26	@Pea Ridge	1,2,3,4	4
DECEMBER			
2	Elkins	1,2,5,6	4:30
3	@Elkins	3,4,4B	4:30
5	@Kingston	3,5	5
6	@Beebe	2,4,6	5
9	Bergman	1,2,5,6	4:30
10	@Cave City	1,3,4	5
13	@Salem	2,3,4	5
14	Collierville, Tenn.	3	12
17	Flippin	2,3,4	5
19	@Flippin	1,2,5,6	4:30
20	Yellville-Summit	2,3,4	
21	Norwood, Mo.	4	2:30
26-28	Pea Ridge Invit.	3	TBA
26-28	LT Classic	4	TBA
JANUARY			
2-4	NAC Tourney	3,4	TBA
7	@Melbourne	1,3,4	5
9	Jasper	1,5	5
10	Mountain View	2,3,4,6	4:30
11	OMSD Tourney		5
14	@Bergman	2,3,4,4B	4:30
17	Cave City	2,3,4	5
21	Salem	1,3,4	5
24	@Flippin	2,3,4	5
28	@Yellville-Summit	1,2,3	5
31	Melbourne	2,3,4	5
FEBRUARY			
1	Berryville Tourney	5,6	TBA
4	@Mountain View	1,3,4,5	4:30
7	Bergman	1,3,4,4B	4:30
10-15	District Tourney	1,2	TBA
11	West Side Greers Ferry	3,4	5
17-22	District Tourney	3,4	TBA
24-Mar. 1	Regional Tourney	3,4	TBA
MARCH			
4-8	State Tourney	3,4	TBA
13-15	State Finals	3,4	TBA

1- Jr. Girls 2-Jr. Boys 3-Sr. Girls 4-Sr. Boys 5-Seventh Girls 6-Seventh Boys

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 Founders Classical
 Jasper
 Kingston
 Lead Hill
 Mt. Judea
 Omaha

1A-4

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 Magazine
 Mulberry
 Oark
 St. Paul
 Scranton
 Western Yell Co.
Regional Tournament
 1A-1 vs. 1A-4

CLASS 2A

2A-1
 Alpena
 Decatur
 Eureka Springs
 Lifeway Christian
 Ozark Catholic
 Ozark Mountain

2A-4

Acorn
 Danville
 Future School
 Hackett
 Hector
 Johnson Co. Westside
 Mountainburg

Regional Tournament
 2A-1 vs. 2A-4

CLASS 3A

3A-2
 Bergman
 Cave City
 Flippin
 Melbourne
 Mountain View
 Salem
 Valley Springs
 Yellville-Summit

3A-3

Harrisburg
 Hoxie
 Manila
 Newport
 Osceola
 Rivercrest
 Walnut Ridge
Regional Tournament
 3A-2 vs. 3A-3

CLASS 4A

4A-1
 Berryville
 Gentry
 Gravette
 Green Forest
 Huntsville
 Pea Ridge
 Prairie Grove
 Shiloh Christian

4A-4

Clarksville
 Dardanelle
 Mena
 Ozark
 Pottsville
 Waldron
Regional Tournament
 4A-1 vs. 4A-4

CLASS 5A

5A-West
 Alma
 Farmington
 Greenwood
 Harrison
 Mountain Home
 Russellville
 Siloam Springs
 Van Buren
Top 4 teams advances

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Davis on two national player of year watch lists

By UA COMMUNICATIONS

FAYETTEVILLE – Johnell Davis added to his preseason list of honors on Wednesday as the Razorback made the NABC Division I Player of the Year Preseason Watch List and the Jersey Mike's Naismith Trophy Men's College Player of the Year Watch List, presented by AXIA Time.

Davis' Preseason Honors:

- 1 of 20 on NABC Division I Player of the Year Watch List
- 1 of 50 on Naismith Trophy Player of the Year Watch List
- 1 of 20 on Jerry West Shooting Guard of the Year Watch List
- All-America (3rd Team) by CBS Sports
- All-America (3rd Team) by Sports Illustrated
- All-America (3rd Team) by Fox Sports
- All-America (received votes) by AP *
- All-American (received votes) by The Athletic

- All-SEC (2nd Team) by SEC Media
 - All-SEC (2nd Team) by USA TODAY Sports Network
 - No. 1 overall transfer by On3
 - No. 1 "Impact Transfer" by Field of 68
 - No. 2 overall transfer by NCAA.com
 - No. 2 player in the CBS Sports transfer rankings
 - 1 of 30 "Impact Transfers" by College Hoops Today
 - No. 22 on ESPN List of Top 100 Players for 2024-25
 - No. 49 on CBS Sports List of Top 100 Players for 2024-25
- * - AP only lists 1st team and those who received votes

Davis, a graduate senior transfer from Florida Atlantic, was a top 10 finalist for the Jerry West Award last season as well as a top 20 finalist for the Wooden Award. He is listed as the top or #2 rated transfer in the country for this season after being named the 2024 AAC co-Player of the Year. In the AAC last year, Davis ranked

among the top 15 in free throw percentage (2nd, 85.7%); scoring (4th, 18.2 avg.); field goal percentage (4th, 48.3%); defensive rebounds (9th, 4.88 avg.); rebounding (11th, 6.3 avg.); steals (12th, 1.44); assists (13th, 100 total) and double-doubles (13th, 3). In 2023, he led FAU to the Final Four.

2025 NABC Player of the Year - Preseason Watch List

Ace Bailey, Rutgers
Oumar Ballo, Indiana
Johni Broome, Auburn
L.J. Cryer, Houston
Johnell Davis, Arkansas
RJ Davis, North Carolina
Hunter Dickinson, Kansas
Cooper Flagg, Duke
Graham Ike, Gonzaga
Kam Jones, Marquette
Ryan Kalkbrenner, Creighton
Alex Karaban, Connecticut
Tamin Lipsey, Iowa State
Caleb Love, Arizona
Norchad Omier, Baylor
Kadary Richmond, St. John's
Hunter Sallis, Wake Forest

Mark Sears, Alabama
Braden Smith, Purdue
Wade Taylor IV, Texas A&M

Jersey Mike's Naismith Trophy Player of the Year Watch List

Robbie Avila, Saint Louis
Airious "Ace" Bailey, Rutgers
Adrian "Ace" Baldwin Jr., Penn State
Oumar Ballo, Indiana
Johni Broome, Auburn
Markus Burton, Notre Dame
Walter Clayton Jr., Florida
L.J. Cryer, Houston
RJ Davis, North Carolina
Johnell Davis, Arkansas
Tyson Degenhart, Boise State
Tucker DeVries, West Virginia
Hunter Dickinson, Kansas
Eric Dixon, Villanova
VJ Edgcombe, Baylor
Cooper Flagg, Duke
Dawson Garcia, Minnesota
Tyon Grant-Foster, Grand Canyon
Dylan Harper, Rutgers
Dajuan Harris Jr., Kansas
Coleman Hawkins, Kansas State

Bryce Hopkins, Providence
Graham Ike, Gonzaga
Tre Johnson, Texas
Kam Jones, Marquette
Ryan Kalkbrenner, Creighton
Alex Karaban, UConn
Kon Knueppel, Duke
Yaxel Lendeborg, UAB
Tamin Lipsey, Iowa State
Caleb Love, Arizona
Liam McNeeley, UConn
Matthew Murrell, Ole Miss
Grant Nelson, Alabama
Ryan Nembhard, Gonzaga
Norchad Omier, Baylor
Great Osobor, Washington
Kadary Richmond, St. John's
Jeremy Roach, Baylor
J'Wan Roberts, Houston
Jaxson Robinson, Kentucky
Hunter Sallis, Wake Forest
Payton Sandfort, Iowa
Mark Sears, Alabama
Jackson Shelstad, Oregon
Braden Smith, Purdue
AJ Storr, Kansas
Wade Taylor IV, Texas A&M
Bruce Thornton, Ohio State
Zakai Zeigler, Tennessee

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RAZORBACK SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME*
NOVEMBER			
6	Lipscomb	Fayetteville	7 p.m.
9	Baylor	Waco, Texas	6:30 p.m.
13	Troy State	Fayetteville	7 p.m.
18	Pacific	Fayetteville	7 p.m.
22	Arkansas, Little Rock	Fayetteville	8 p.m.
25	Maryland, Eastern Shore	Fayetteville	7 p.m.
28	Illinois	Kansas City, Mo.	3 p.m.
DECEMBER			
3	Miami	Coral Gables, Fla.	12 p.m.
7	Texas, San Antonio	Fayetteville	TBA
10	Michigan	New York, N.Y.	8 p.m.
14	Central Arkansas	North Little Rock	3 p.m.
21	North Carolina A&T	Fayetteville	1:30 p.m.
30	Oakland	Fayetteville	7 p.m.
JANUARY			
4	Tennessee	Knoxville, Tenn.	12 p.m.
8	Ole Miss	Fayetteville	6 p.m.
11	Florida	Fayetteville	3 p.m.
14	LSU	Baton Rouge, La.	8 p.m.
18	Missouri	Columbia, Mo.	5 p.m.
22	Georgia	Fayetteville	8 p.m.
25	Oklahoma	Fayetteville	7:30 p.m.
FEBRUARY			
1	Kentucky	Lexington, Ky.	8 p.m.
5	Texas	Austin, Texas	8 p.m.
8	Alabama	Fayetteville	7 p.m.
12	LSU	Fayetteville	8 p.m.
15	Texas A&M	College Station, Texas	11 a.m.
19	Auburn	Auburn, Ala.	8 p.m.
22	Missouri	Fayetteville	7 p.m.
26	Texas	Fayetteville	8 p.m.
MARCH			
1	South Carolina	Columbia, S.C.	12 p.m.
4	Vanderbilt	Nashville, Tenn.	9 p.m.
8	Mississippi State	Fayetteville	11 a.m.
12-16	SEC Tournament	Nashville, Tenn.	TBA

*All times are subject to change



ARKANSAS RAZORBACK WOMEN'S SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	LOCATION	TIME*
NOVEMBER			
4	Fairfield	Fayetteville	6:30 p.m.
8	Texas A&M Commerce	Fayetteville	10:30 a.m.
11	Arkansas, Little Rock	Little Rock	7 p.m.
14	Texas, Arlington	Fayetteville	6:30 p.m.
17	UCLA	Los Angeles, Calif.	6:30 p.m.
21	Oral Roberts	Fayetteville	6 p.m.
24	Arkansas State	Fayetteville	2 p.m.
29	Oklahoma State	Daytona, Fla.	4:45 p.m.
30	Bowling Green	Daytona, Fla.	12:15 p.m.
DECEMBER			
5	Boston College	Fayetteville	6 p.m.
8	Southeastern Missouri	Fayetteville	2 p.m.
15	Texas Tech	Fayetteville	2 p.m.
18	Liberty	Cherokee, N.C.	8:30 p.m.
19	Toledo/Troy	Cherokee, N.C.	TBA
29	Central Arkansas	Fayetteville	2 p.m.
JANUARY			
2	LSU	Fayetteville	8 p.m.
5	Texas	Austin, Texas	2 p.m.
9	Auburn	Auburn, Ala.	6 p.m.
12	Tennessee	Fayetteville	12 p.m.
19	Alabama	Fayetteville	4 p.m.
23	Vanderbilt	Nashville, Tenn.	6:30 p.m.
26	Kentucky	Lexington, Ky.	11 a.m.
30	Texas A&M	Fayetteville	6:30 p.m.
FEBRUARY			
3	Florida	Fayetteville	6 p.m.
6	Mississippi State	Starkville, Miss.	6:30 p.m.
9	Georgia	Athens, Ga.	11 a.m.
13	Ole Miss	Fayetteville	6:30 p.m.
20	South Carolina	Columbia, S.C.	6 p.m.
23	Oklahoma	Fayetteville	2 p.m.
27	Missouri	Fayetteville	6:30 p.m.
MARCH			
2	Texas A&M	College Station, Texas	2 p.m.
5-9	SEC Tournament	Greenville, S.C.	TBA

*All times are subject to change



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11 #ProHogs on NBA Opening Day Rosters

By UA Communications

FAYETTEVILLE – For the second year in a row, a program-best 11 Razorbacks are on the 2024-25 NBA opening day rosters.

Last year, the 11 #ProHogs were the most Razorbacks in the NBA in the same season. The previous best was nine players in the 1992-93 season and 1995-96 season.

Bobby Portis, playing his 12th season in 2024-25, leads the Razorback contingent as he starts his fifth year with the Milwaukee Bucks.

Arkansas is one of eight NCAA programs to have at least 11 players on NBA opening day rosters. Arkansas is also second among SEC programs by having 11 players on NBA rosters.

In addition to the 11 #ProHogs, Razorback head coach John Calipari has an NBA-best 29 players on NBA opening day rosters.

RAZORBACKS ON OPENING DAY ROSTERS (11)

- #0 Anthony Black, Orlando Magic
- #14 Ricky Council IV, Philadelphia 76ers
- #21 Daniel Gafford, Dallas Mavericks
- #11 Isaiah Joe, OKC Thunder

- #8 Mason Jones, Sacramento Kings – on two-way contract
- #4 Moses Moody, Golden State Warriors
- #9 Bobby Portis, Milwaukee Bucks
- #8 Nick Smith Jr., Charlotte Hornets
- #17 Stanley Umude, Milwaukee Bucks – on two-way contract
- #27 Jordan Walsh, Boston Celtics
- #6 Jaylin Williams, OKC Thunder

CALIPARI PLAYERS ON OPENING DAY ROSTERS (29)

- #13 Bam Adebayo, C/F, Miami Heat
- #1 Devin Booker, G, Phoenix Suns
- #4 Brandon Boston, G, New Orleans Pelicans—on two-way contract
- #3 Anthony Davis, F/C, L.A. Lakers
- #4 Rob Dillingham, G, Minnesota Timberwolves
- #19 Justin Edwards, SF, Philadelphia 76ers —on two-way contract
- #5 De'Aaron Fox, G, Sacramento Kings
- #2 Shai Gilgeous-Alexander, G, OKC Thunder
- #14 Tyler Herro, G, Miami Heat
- #22 Isaiah Jackson, F, Indiana Pacers
- #0 Keldon Johnson, F/G, San Antonio Spurs

- #7 Chris Livingston, F, Milwaukee Bucks
- #41 Trey Lyles, F, Sacramento Kings
- #0 Tyrese Maxey, PG, Philadelphia 76ers
- #0 Malik Monk, G, Sacramento Kings
- #27 Jamal Murray, G, Denver Nuggets
- #5 Immanuel Quickley, G, Toronto Raptors
- #30 Julius Randle, F/C, Minnesota Timberwolves
- #12 Antonio Reeves, G, New Orleans Pelicans
- #4 Nick Richards, C, Charlotte Hornets
- #17 Shaedon Sharpe, G, Portland Trail Blazers
- #15 Reed Sheppard, G, Houston Rockets
- #00 Jacob Toppin, F, New York Knicks—on two-way contract
- #32 Karl-Anthony Towns, C/F, New York Knicks
- #44 Oscar Tshiebwe, F/C, Utah Jazz—on two-way contract
- #2 Jarred Vanderbilt, F, Los Angeles Lakers
- #22 Cason Wallace, G, OKC Thunder
- #25 PJ Washington, F, Dallas Mavericks
- #23 TyTy Washington, Phoenix Suns (2021-22)—on two-way contract

MOST NBA PLAYERS ON OPENING DAY ROSTER (including 2-way)

- 29 Kentucky
 - 24 Duke
 - 14 UCLA
 - 12 Arizona
 - 11 Arkansas
 - 11 Kansas
 - 11 Gonzaga
 - 11 USC
 - 10 Baylor
 - 10 Michigan
 - 10 Texas
- SEC ONLY**
- 29 Kentucky
 - 11 Arkansas
 - 10 Texas
 - 7 Alabama
 - 7 LSU
 - 7 Tennessee
 - 5 Texas A&M
 - 5 Vanderbilt
 - 4 Auburn
 - 4 Florida
 - 4 Missouri
 - 3 Georgia
 - 3 Oklahoma
 - 2 South Carolina
 - 0 Ole Miss
 - 0 Mississippi State

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